

CWEC

Citywide Educational Coalition
37 Temple Place | 542-2835
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED

MAY 11 1987

GOV 90-1343

BPS in Brief

A monthly review of
issues affecting the
Boston Public Schools.

IN JANUARY, FEBRUARY, AND MARCH, 1986

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- concentrated on budget issues. Began developing a FY87 budget with \$10M in reductions. Set up two committees:

Technical Advisory Committee: to study management issues. Members: William Boyan, Charles Grigsby, Ramona Hilgenkamp, Ronald Homer, Miguel Satut, Robert Sperber, Sam Tyler, Jim Young.

Budget Advisory Committee: to study priorities. Made up of outside agencies (CWEC, Black Educators' Alliance, Citywide Parent Council, etc.)

- began contract talks with teachers' union (BTU). BPS wants affirmative action in contract, more after-school teacher time; BTU wants more money, smaller class size. Current contract ends August, 1986.
- presented in house drop-out report. Estimated rate: 33%.
- identified sixteen priorities to be studied as Phase 1 of his three year Boston Education Plan:

Adolescent Issues
At-Risk Students
Counseling/Guidance
Curriculum Support
Early Childhood
Facilities
Materials/Supplies
Mathematics

Middle/High School Programs
Parent/Community Support
Professional Development
Reading
Safe School Environment
Special/Bilingual/Voc. Education
Student Assignments
Writing

In Phase 2, Task Forces will make recommendations by June, 1986.

- chose a fourth aide, Lydia Rivera-Abrams. Others: Mike Robinson, from Rochester; Bob Schwartz, Boston Compact Director; Ian Forman, Public Information Officer.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- discussed but never voted on removing the mayor as ex-officio member of the Committee. He has attended two meetings since he was appointed, January, 1984.
- approved the Boston Education Plan with only Casper voting NO and Burke voting PRESENT.
- voted unanimously to oppose the Mayor's Home Rule petition removing limited fiscal autonomy from BPS (i.e. removing the guaranteed base budget).

△
CEC
83
Jan.
Feb.
Mar.
1986

THE SCHOOLS:

- received their projected enrollments for next year, up about 1,200 students, mostly elementary.
- decided how to spend their \$10/student money (the Paleologos initiative) from Chapter 188. About 92% of all towns have applied.
- gave out the second report card and mailed warning notices to students in danger of failing (about 15%). High schools notified seniors who have not scored high enough on the required reading test (DRP) to graduate. About 71% of special education seniors were waived from the DRP standard, and most bilingual seniors took a substitute test in place of the DRP.
- began intra/extra-mural sports in middle schools. Programs are partly funded by Fund for Excellence HEART Funds.

THE STATE BOARD:

- met in January at Boston's Bromley-Heath housing project and approved a draft of a statewide Adult Education Plan.
- met in February in Millis, the hometown of Horace Mann, and hired a new Commissioner, Ron Raynolds, formerly Commissioner in Alaska. He serves at the discretion of the Board, receives a salary/benefits package worth \$85,000, and starts work in July.
- met in March at Malden High School and voted unanimously against an amendment which would allow state assistance to private schools. "Assistance" is not defined. State House vote is April 16.
- began Chapter 188 biennial assessment of schools' performance by testing students in grades 3, 7 and 11. Annual basic skills testing of individual student's performance will begin in the fall for grades 3, 5 and 9. Hired a New Hampshire firm to conduct testing.
- approved 1,064 Commonwealth Scholars, public and private school seniors who will attend colleges in the state. Each high school gets at least three; grants are for \$1000. Fifty-two BPS seniors were chosen.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

BPS BUDGET:

For FY87, expenses expected to be about \$295M.
For FY87, appropriation expected to be \$288M.
What about the other \$7M? Cuts or more money?

PROMOTIONAL
POLICY:

Should the BPS enforce its policy and not graduate seniors who have not met the standards?

FACILITIES:

Should the superintendent close schools before he hears from his Task Forces on Facilities and Student Assignment?

PAY RAISE:

Will the superintendent get the raise he asked for?

STIPEND:

Will the mayor, governor and legislature agree to the \$7,500. annual stipend for School Committee members that the City Council just approved?

BPS IN BRIEF is a pilot project funded by the State Street Bank and Trust Co.

CWEC

Citywide Educational Coalition
37 Temple Place | 542-2835
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED

MAY 11 1987

BPS in Brief

A monthly review of
issues affecting the
Boston Public Schools.

IN APRIL, 1986,

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- projected FY87 expenses of \$303.6M, up \$33.7M.
Additional expenses are for:
inflation, benefits, etc.,.....\$18.0M
costs of new contracts (teachers, etc.).....\$ 5.7M
new dropout prevention program.....\$ 2.0M
more for books and supplies, about double.....\$ 2.0M
more to fix up school buildings.....\$ 2.0M

Recommended asking City Hall for only \$288M. To balance the budget, BPS needs to cut \$15.6M. Among suggested cuts were school closings, saving \$3.9M:

Close:	Use:
Boston Technical High.....	leave vacant
Jamaica Plain High.....	move in Latin Academy
Madison Park High.....	move in Boston Tech
Umana High.....	make district school
Barnes Middle.....	move to Umana
T.Roosevelt Middle.....	move in Hernandez Elem.

Rationale for closings also included need to: reduce the number of high schools, better use Madison Park facility, house Boston Latin Academy in existing building rather than build new one.

- met with Mayor Flynn to request \$288M. Mayor had submitted preliminary budget to City Council asking for only \$280M for the schools.

- at the prompting of the federal court, recommended that the \$35M appropriated by City Council for renovations to both Latin Schools go instead to:

Boston Latin School renovations.....\$18M
nine schools chosen by the court.....\$13M
Boston Latin Academy and Hernandez School
to renovate schools they may move to....\$ 4M

- drafted dropout prevention plan to be presented at May conference. Hosted dinner at John Hancock for twelve dropouts and their parents to discuss why they left.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- held one regular meeting, one special meeting on the budget, and one public hearing on school closings.
- again questioned whether the new BPS Promotional Policy is being enforced fairly and called for a detailed school-by-school report.

A
CEC
83
Apr.
986

THE SCHOOLS:

- began Metropolitan Tests in math and reading, feeling much pressure to raise their scores this year. Most schools have spent the last few weeks on test preparation skills with their students. Scores will be out in June.
- are just getting what they purchased with their \$10/student Chapter 188 money which was to be used for this school year. Money is not going directly to individual school accounts as teachers and principals would prefer, but through central office.
- held Citywide Science Fairs and Spelling Bees.
- sixth, eighth and ninth grade students received acceptances to Boston's exam high schools. Almost 4,000 students took the test; 1,664 were accepted to:

Latin Academy: 416	Assignment to all three schools:
Latin School: 586	about 65% white and Asian
Boston Tech: 656	and 35% black and Hispanic.

THE STATE BOARD:

- approved a statewide Adult Education Policy which will coordinate all public and private efforts.
- endorsed a report on bilingual education which criticized the BPS for keeping students in bilingual classes too long, often more than six years.

IN OTHER NEWS:

- Mayor Flynn appointed Felix Arroyo, BPS parent and school activist, as his Education Advisor, replacing Robert Consalvo who was promoted to Personnel Director for the city.
- Boston Latin School Headmaster Michael Contompasis announced he's taking a one-year sabbatical.
- The new Commissioner of Education, Ron Reynolds, takes office on June 2.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- EVALUATION: Will all BPS principals get satisfactory ratings as they did last year?
- BUDGET: How will the superintendent fund his dropout prevention program and other initiatives?
- TEACHERS' CONTRACT: Talks are stalled because of BPS budget uncertainties. Will the contract be settled by August 31?
- SENIORS: Will the BPS hold all seniors to the graduation standards?

CWEC

Citywide Educational Coalition
37 Temple Place 1542-2835
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED

MAY 11 1987

BPS in Brief

A monthly review of
issues affecting the
Boston Public Schools.

In May:

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- lost on his recommendation to close or consolidate schools to save \$3.9M. Voting for the closings were School Committee members Burke, Casper and Grady.

- consulted with outside advisors from the Research Bureau and Arthur Young & Co. on FY87 budget. His probable final recommendations will include:

Cuts: \$3.0M in transportation

\$0.5M in middle/high school reductions

\$1.1M in central admin. (20 plus clerical)

\$1.1M in high school administrators (29)

Additions: \$2.0M more for instructional supplies

\$5.7M for 3% pay raises.

- hoped to add \$6M for school repairs and \$2M for at-risk students, but will now fund these priorities at lower levels, probably \$1M each. The total budget, including money for contractual agreements with teachers, may end up at about \$290.5M.
- finished choosing project managers for sixteen Boston Education Plan Task Forces. About half will be school employees and half outsiders.
- received principal evaluations from the five district superintendents. Results: all 123 were rated satisfactory.
- expanded Project Promise. All students at the Timilty Middle School in Roxbury will go 90 minutes more each day and 3 hours on Saturday. School day has been restructured to emphasize skills. Funded with State money, about \$400,000.
- hosted a conference on dropout prevention sponsored by the State Street Bank, the Federal Reserve Bank, and the Council for Economic Development.
- halted contract talks with the teachers' union until a budget that would allow the School Committee to make economic proposals is settled. The latest proposed budget sets aside \$5.7M, equal to a 3% pay raise. Contract expires in August.

(over)

- THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:
- approved the plan for the merger of the HHORC---a half-day vocational high school---and the adjoining Madison Park High, thus creating a full-time vocational school. Opposed: McCuire, O'Bryant, Owens-Hicks, Wade and Walsh-Tomasini who wanted a comprehensive/vocational high school.
 - began superintendent evaluation before voting on a raise. Current salary: \$70,000. Research Bureau recommends \$90,000. A decision is due in mid-June.
 - set aside \$150,000 in the proposed budget to cover a \$10,000 stipend for each of them and possible raise for Dr. Wilson. Needed: City Council and Mayoral approval. Total School Committee costs would be about \$950,000 for next year.
 - waived the requirement that all 5th graders score a minimum score on the Degrees of Reading Power Test to be promoted. The reason cited was that the system had not provided the agreed-upon remediation.

THE SCHOOLS:

- ordered textbooks and supplies. Allocation is twice last year's: \$81-\$86 per student. Total: \$5.6M.
- evaluated teachers. Principals gave nine of the 4,000+ teachers unsatisfactory ratings. Dismissal procedures will follow.
- received lay-off notices for 82 middle and high school teachers. Twelve of these have certificates the BPS cannot use and were among those slated to be laid off last June. They were saved by the School Committee, and there have been no courses for them to teach this year.

THE STATE BOARD:

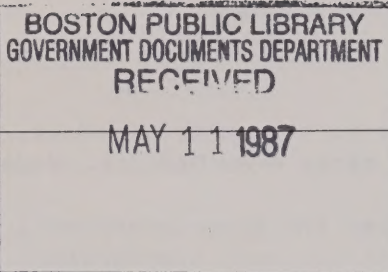
- accepted a study that found a wide variation in the content of high school courses. State currently regulates only physical education.

IN OTHER NEWS:

- The City Council approved a home rule petition that eliminated BPS' limited fiscal autonomy. Opposed: Tierney

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- Evaluation: Of the Superintendent by the School Committee, of the District Superintendents by the Superintendent. Can a system with a 42% drop-out rate have all satisfactory principals?
- PTU Contract Talks: The two sides are very far apart. Will three months be long enough?
- Budget: Will at least the twelve teachers without assignments be laid off? How will the BPS bring about a \$3M reduction in transportation costs?
- Salary: Will Dr. Wilson receive a raise?



In JUNE, 1986,

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- submitted FY87 budget of \$293M, up \$23M. Included:
 - * program for at-risk students (\$2M)
 - * doubling of textbook budget (\$2M)
 - * additional funds to repair schools (\$2M).
 - * teacher pay raises of 3% (\$5.7M)
 Anticipated income: \$289.1M, still \$3.9M short.
- withdrew his recommendation to lay teachers off
Reason: insufficient School Committee support.
Result: next September the BPS will have about 20 teachers without assignments.
- announced members of his Boston Education Plan Task Forces: 260 people, about 85 from outside the BPS.
Business community members:
Ted Dooley, Private Industry Council, Jeff Graham, Bank of Boston, Dana Harrell, Equitable Real Estate, Donna Levy, New England Life, Michael Manzo, The Beal Companies, Gus Medieros, The Beacon Companies, Daniel Morley, State Street Bank, Mark Rosenthal, Bank of New England, Gerald Sarno, Research Bureau, Carolyn Sidor, Building Owners/Managers Assoc., Diane Sims, Shawmut Bank, Michael Washington, Chisolm-Washington Architects, Fred Zerger, Digital Equipment Company.
University members: Boston University: Don Davies, Alan Hoffer, Hubie Jones, Ralph Mosher, Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Bob Sperber; Cambridge College: Mahesh Sharma; Harvard: Wm. Beardsley, Stephen Brion-Meisels, Ken Haskins, Joan Karp, Katherine Merseeth, Janie Ward; Leslie: Frank Davis, Ann Larkin, May Reinhardt; Northeastern: Greg Coffin, Mel Sims; Roxbury Community: Wm. Thompson; Simmons: Bard Hamlen; U. Mass Amherst: Atron Gentry; U. Mass Boston: Robert Corrigan, Lucia David, Peter Golden, Donaldo Macedo, Jean McCormick; Wheelock: Karen Worth.
- planned a Leadership Academy, a collaborative effort with Boston University and The Boston Foundation, to train about 30 current or potential principals a year. Goal: improve educational leadership. Annual Budget: about \$150K.
- allocated the \$5.8M state desegregation money (Chapter 636). Most went to long-standing programs with outside institutions. Next year all 636 money will be targeted to his Boston Education Plan priorities so new spending decisions about these external funds will be made.

Δ
CEC
SB

Sum
986

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE: ● evaluated the superintendent. Overall: superior. Lower marks from McGuire, Wade, and Walsh-Tomasini.

- accepted the superintendent's report on 1986 reading and math standardized test scores. Grades 6-12 all below national medians, with high school scores far below median. Discussion lasted thirty seconds in a school committee meeting of two hours.
- approved a raise for the superintendent, from \$70,000 to \$95,000. Raise makes the salary tenth best in the country. NO: Casper, Walsh-Tomasini. Still needed: mayoral and city council approval.

THE SCHOOLS:

- held graduations. Of the 3,242 seniors in September, 2,573 graduated. About 400 of the seniors still enrolled in April did not graduate, fifty for failing a reading test, others for attendance or not passing enough courses.
- administered final curriculum tests, designed to make sure students have learned the essentials in all subjects. Principals receive results in August.
- sent home library department summer reading lists.
- began a push to get students to return textbooks. Textbook loss is a major expense for the system, but there has been no central accountability.

THE FEDERAL COURT:

- repeated its intention to let the School Committee make changes in its orders as long as they follow the proscribed process. The School Committee can thus make Madison Park/Humphrey a vocational education rather than a comprehensive school after it waits ninety days. Plaintiffs object, however.

THE GOVERNOR:

- signed a law which supersedes Boston's residency requirement. Teachers and administrators no longer must be Boston residents to be hired.

IN OTHER NEWS:

- The City Council is considering an \$8M loan order for nine schools the Court identified as needing repairs immediately. They will then, with the superintendent's approval, request the Court to approve spending the \$35M set aside for the two Latin Schools. Sponsors: Tierney, Byrne. Vote: July 23. Mayor's approval also needed.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- The superintendent/school committee relationship. In the last two months, the superintendent lost on one major vote, (school consolidations) withdrew his recommendation on another (teacher lay-offs), and received no support from minority members on two others (Project Promise and voc. ed. merger).

MAY 11 1987

October 7, 1986

IN AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER:

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- appointed ten new principals, all from within the BPS: 5 black, 4 white, 1 Hispanic; 6 men, 4 women. Headmasters/principals now 25% black, 68% white, 7% other minority. Also: removed four others from their schools to work under another principal for a year for "professional development."
- negotiated a new 3-year teachers' contract with:
 - * 6.5% pay raise each year. By 1988-89, range will be \$24K-\$41K, and most teachers will make \$38,800.
 - * Reduced maximum class size in kindergarten (25), grades 4-5 (28), and grades 6-8 (30).
 - * Planning time for elementary teachers. All teachers will have less mandatory after-school time.
 - * BPS control of teacher selection for special programs, such as Project Promise.
 - * Teacher evaluation change: an "Unsatisfactory" rating becomes part of a teacher's permanent record.
 - * Expected cost of all employees' contracts: \$10M+.
- chose Ted Dooley of the Private Industry Council (PIC) to replace Bob Schwartz as Boston Compact head and as superintendent's special assistant.
- agreed with mayor to consolidate and align city and BPS programs for dropouts and potential dropouts. Likely: expansion of PIC's Compact Ventures; contracting out alternative programs through other agencies (e.g., ABCD). Probable cost: \$5M of federal, state, city, BPS, private funds.
- compromised with the MBTA. Agreed: BPS will be allowed to buy T passes for 4,000 more students, beginning in January. Savings: \$400,000/year. Transportation budget deficit still about \$2.5M.
- set this year's four priorities:
 - to assure that all students can read their textbooks;
 - can compute and solve math problems;
 - have information on jobs, colleges, career choices;
 - know the dangers of drugs, especially "crack."
- drafted a new policy which allows half-day kindergarten students to be dropped off at day care centers after school. One small step for the BPS, one giant leap for parents.

over

A
CEC
83
Aug.
Sept.
986

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- gave limited power to the superintendent to hire some staff before their approval.
- almost failed to fire an incompetent teacher. Nine votes were needed; only nine members were present. Donlan voted NO then changed vote to YES. She was the only teacher recommended for firing for incompetence in the past year.
- rejected the superintendent's choice for an evaluator in the Office of Research & Development. NO votes: Burke, Casper, Donlan, O'Reilly, Walsh-Tomasini, Wade.
- began quarterly informal sessions with the business community, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

THE SCHOOLS:

- began the year with shiny new textbooks in many classes, rather than having them arrive during the year as in the past.
- opened with about the same enrollment as last year, despite predictions of a 1500-student increase. Biggest gains: Lewenberg & Mackey Middle Schools.
- implemented a new citywide homework policy: every student will have homework every night.
- greeted enthusiastically the ACCESS agreement guaranteeing college money and jobs for BPS grads. Principals' response: tremendous motivational factor!
- with the PIC, placed 2,591 students through the Summer Jobs Program, exceeding the goal of placing 2,500.
- accepted the U.S. Dept. of Education's Award of Excellence for the Quincy School. Only 210 schools were chosen nationwide. Prize: an American flag.

THE MAYOR:

- agreed to the School Committee's full budget request of \$293M, with no negotiation and no reduction. Budget now before City Council.
- boosted the BPS capital repairs budget with a \$30M increase. Most money will be used for roofs, furnaces, etc. Total repair needs estimated at \$92M, so \$62M more still needed.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- Budget. Contract costs will exceed what was allocated, and transportation costs may be \$2.5M more. What will be cut to balance the budget?
- Custodians' contract. Will the Finance Commission's recommendations be heeded in negotiations? Will some custodial services be contracted out?

MAY 11 1987

IN NOVEMBER:

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- released results of last year's evaluation of 4,565 teachers:
 - * 2,607 (57%) were rated excellent
 - * 1,938 (42.5%) were satisfactory
 - * 20 (.4%) were unsatisfactory. Of the 20: eight have resigned, two have been fired, and dismissal proceedings have begun against the other ten. Districts C & D (W.Roxbury, Hyde Park, Dorchester, South Boston) had one unsatisfactory teacher each.
- updated his May drop-out report to include 1985-86 data:
 - * Last year, 15.7% of BPS high school students left, down from previous years' rates of 16.4% and 16.9%. Overall rate (the total who drop out between 9th and 12th grade) remains near 44%.
 - * More boys (59%) than girls (41%) dropped out, though the high school population is evenly divided. Asians are least likely to drop out, Hispanics most likely.
 - * Schools with the highest drop-out rate were the same as last year: Burke, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Boston, South Boston, Madison Park, and Brighton.
- suspended the five custodial supervisors identified as "no-shows" by the Fin Com and began dismissal hearings. A court challenge by the custodians' union has put the issue on hold temporarily. Final vote to fire or demote will rest with School Committee.
- was named to the Board of Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Salary: \$8,000/year.
- spent a considerable amount of time with the Private Industry Council Board on drop-out prevention strategies.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- approved applying for \$125K in state money to expand Dorchester High's Compact Ventures to South Boston, English and Burke High Schools. Total cost: \$1M. Other funds include: PIC (\$124K), the welfare department (\$148K), Job Training Act (\$312K).
- voted to install seat belts on all school buses without conclusive evidence that they will make students safer. NO votes: Browne, Burke, McGuire. They also voted unanimously to hire monitors for all buses. Estimated cost of both: @ \$3M heretofore unbudgeted dollars. The superintendent was not asked, nor did he make, a recommendation on this issue.
- heard angry parents describe BPS non-compliance with the special education laws as "inexcusable, illegal, immoral neglect of students." Members said they were surprised at the charges and requested a report from the superintendent.

more

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE (continued):

- received results of state Assessment Tests for grades 3, 7, & 11.
Findings: BPS students weak in reading and science, stronger in math. Overall, below both state averages and other urban area averages. Also included were results of a questionnaire answered by BPS students, among them:
 - * Half the 3rd grade students did not read outside of school the previous day, and one-third watch more than 5 hours of TV daily.
 - * Two-thirds of 7th grade students do more than one hour of homework each night; statewide, only half the students do that much.
 - * Only 35% of 7th grade students said someone at home could help them with science homework, half the state figure of 67%.
 - * About one-quarter of 11th grade students work twenty or more hours each week.
- reviewed legal counsel's opinion of recent changes to residency law.
Effect: the top of the managerial pyramid (the superintendent, the legal and research offices, a few others) and the bottom (bus monitors, school police, cafeteria help, etc.) must live in Boston. The large number of employees in the middle are now exempt: deputy superintendents, most central administrators, teachers, principals, custodians, secretaries.
- unanimously approved health curriculum objectives for grades K-8, including sex education for all grades.

THE SCHOOLS:

- gave out the first report cards. Schools which required parents to pick them up had great success, but not all schools do it. Contract allows principals to ask teachers to come to two night meetings/year.
- had their once-a-year, all-day Professional Day cancelled because of snow. To date, it has not been re-scheduled.

CITY COUNCIL:

- approved a school budget of \$293.5M with numerous comments that "This is it. They better not come back and ask for any more." BPS will also have \$2.1M in Chapter 188 money to pay for part of the teacher salary increases.

THE COMPENSATION REVIEW BOARD:

- recommended a first-time ever stipend for School Committee members on the condition they reduce their staffs.
Currently: members are not paid but each has a \$43,000 allocation for staff. Total: \$559,000/year.
Recommended: each member would get a \$15,000/year stipend but only \$22,500 for staff. Also: the Committee would collectively hire an ombudsman and a policy researcher to work with all members.
Total: \$557,500/year.

[NOTE: City Council did not heed the recommendations and in December voted a \$7,500/year stipend with no reduction in staff. Cost for School Committee staff, secretarial support, supplies, and postage is approaching \$1M.]

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- The increasing activity of the School Committee Subcommittees: the superintendent is being bypassed in educational decision-making.

CWEC

Citywide Educational Coalition
37 Temple Place | 542-2835
Boston, Massachusetts 02111

IN DECEMBER, 1986:

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED

MAY 11 1987

BPS in Brief

A monthly review of
issues affecting the
Boston Public Schools.

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- released principal and custodian evaluation results for last year:

Principals:

77 (65%)---excellent

42 (35%)---satisfactory*

0 ---unsatisfactory

Custodians:

452 (97%)---satisfactory in all areas

15 (3%)---satisfactory in most areas

0 ---unsatisfactory

*includes one whose "unsatisfactory" was changed to "satisfactory" because of improper procedure. Principals are evaluated by the district superintendent; Dr. Wilson named new district superintendents this year. Custodians are evaluated by the five custodial area supervisors.

- was delayed in attempt to fire those five custodial area supervisors by court injunction, later lifted. Fin Com identified them as "no-shows" in September report. He will now recommend dismissal.
- announced that the BPS does not have the money to install seat belts or hire 1,000 monitors for buses, as voted in November. BPS has hired 300 monitors (\$600K thru 6-87). Cost for seat belts/all monitors: \$3M. Options: rescind the seat belt vote or cut programs/staff.
- quietly withdrew his plan to begin busing half-day kindergarten students to and from day care centers. Will retain present policy of picking up and dropping off students at home address only. No reasons were given.
- refined a list of criteria for school closings which had come to him from a School Committee subcommittee. To be considered now: a school's effectiveness, population, desegregation, climate, other factors.
- met with separate groups of parents from Latin Academy, Boston Tech and Madison Park High Schools to discuss building use. Probable: recommendation to consolidate schools because he feels the BPS has too many high school buildings: 17 for 16,600 students.
- sent letters of praise to 72 principals whose schools had higher than average attendance for November. Of the 17 high schools, only five qualified: Latin Academy, Latin School, Tech, Copley, Boston High.
- oversaw audit of BPS Music Department. Findings: funds missing and BPS tubas showing up in Boston College Marching Band. Coming: recommendation to fire Music Dept. Head, Peter Siragusa.
- screened and chose a new Director of Transportation: Charles Puglisi, School Transportation Director in Palatine, IL. Vote due in January.
- went to England to advise officials on public/private partnerships.

BPS in Brief is funded by the State Street Bank and Trust Company.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- met in one marathon, 7-hour session marked by name-calling and disruption. Spent an hour and twenty minutes on personnel issues, including 30 minutes on the 60-day appointment of an acting administrator.
- almost defeated the hiring of an assistant principal chosen by school staff and parents. Her work experience: Assistant Commissioner for the Dept. of Public Health. Reason: she was from "outside the system." NO votes: Casper, Donlan, Grady, Walsh-Tomasini, Nucci.
- approved, with no discussion, Dr. Wilson's magnet school proposal to be submitted to the federal gov't for \$4M.
- defeated Mr. Casper's attempt to ban the distribution of contraceptives in the schools. Most wanted to wait until the superintendent makes a recommendation for-or-against the issue in February. Voting YES for the ban were Casper, Donlan, O'Reilly, Walsh-Tomasini. PRESENT: Burke.
- held a special hearing on the Saturday before Christmas and heard parent/student/driver objections to transportation changes. Plan passed, with NO votes from members McGuire, Owens-Hicks, Wade.
- again deferred until the next meeting Dr. Wilson's request to discuss the role of SC subcommittees and his role as superintendent.

THE SCHOOLS:

- chose to-give-or-not-give an optional mid-year test on the curriculum. Due in February: a systemwide and school-by-school report on how well BPS students are mastering the four-year-old curriculum objectives for their grade in each subject.
- began paperwork to get their Chapter 188 school site money: \$10/pupil in each school. Schools decided in October how to spend \$, but the BPS requires central processing of the paperwork. Most schools will get what they ordered in January. More exotic requests: later.
- held a two-hour inservice meeting, this one run by each school's principal. Teacher's contract allows students to be dismissed two hours early, five times a year for meetings, the only times the principal meets with the entire school staff. One frequent parent complaint: some principals hold a short meeting and then allow staff to leave.
- sent out mid-term warning notices to students who are failing. Requested: that parents schedule a conference with the teachers. There is no system-wide plan to insure that these conferences take place.
- completed their federal 874 survey forms, a task that takes many hours of a principal's time each December. Survey identifies students who live on federal property (in Boston, housing projects). Findings: 50% of BPS students do. Numbers determine "Impact Aid": \$5M last year.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- The growing budget deficit, somewhere between \$4M and \$5M.
- The School Committee subcommittee structure and its relationship to Dr. Wilson. Will they continue to make recommendations without his participation as happened with the seat belt vote?

MAY 11 1987

IN JANUARY, 1987:

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- threatened to resign when the School Committee defeated a plan to consolidate schools that he had worked on since June.
- received reports from all but two of his sixteen Boston Education Plan Task Forces. Next: he and senior staff will study the 200+ recommendations and formulate a five-year plan for the BPS. To that end, they spent two days on a retreat at the Endicott House in Dedham. The plan needs to be presented to the School Committee in time to affect the FY88 budget, no later than the end of March.
- continued contract negotiations with principals and administrators.
At issue: pay raise equal to that of teachers and more health benefits. Dr. Wilson has offered 5.5%; the union wants 6.5%. Contract expired 8-31. All make between \$41K and \$55K. Still to be settled: the custodians' and clerical contracts. The \$293M budget includes 5% raises; larger settlements will add to any deficit. BPS is currently spending at a \$300M rate.
- handled some difficult personnel problems:
 - * withdrew his recommendation to fire the five "no-show" custodial area supervisors. Three will be allowed to retire; two were demoted to lesser positions. Reason: speculation is that firing would take too much staff time and the School Committee might vote NO in the end.
 - * began dismissal proceedings against Peter Siragusa, Music Dept. Head, whose books flunked an independent audit. Missing: thousands of dollars and many musical instruments. After proceedings began, Mr. Siragusa volunteered to retire, and was allowed to do so. The audit, however, has been turned over to the D.A.
- filed the required annual report to the federal court on the race/number of BPS administrators. Findings: BPS continues to be far ahead of any other employer in the city in its minority hiring practices. Of the 700 administrators, 25% are black, 68% are white and 7% are other minority. All make \$35K-\$55K.
- initiated a series of meetings with principals. He and his cabinet will meet regularly with each district's principals---about 25 in each group---to share concerns and info.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- elected officers: Mr. Nucci defeated Mr. O'Bryant for the second year in a row, but won with no black support. Also elected: Mr. O'Reilly as Vice-President, Mr. Burke as Treasurer. The School Committee is now headed by three white males, two of them bachelors.
- passed, then defeated, the superintendent's plan to merge three high schools into one and to relocate Latin Academy. The plan was defeated when members O'Bryant and McGuire changed their PRESENT votes to NO. Reason: Not enough parent input. Also voting NO: Donlan, Grady, O'Reilly, Walsh-Tomasini. [UPDATE: the plan passed at the February meeting after more vote-changing.]
- heard special needs parents plea to "Get Kervin to School." The 3-year old has yet to get to school because the BPS had denied pick up/drop off at his day care center. Currently: transportation is to and from home only. [UPDATE: Kervin finally started school on Feb. 10, five months after school began.]

THE SCHOOLS:

- began the budget process. Elementary schools have little they can control; middle and high schools have more. Headmasters, eg., can drop a music course and substitute a computer course. The staffing level is determined downtown, however.
- evaluated custodians. The custodial area managers---those identified by Fin Com as "no-shows"---do evaluation and the principal has to appeal the decision if he or she disagrees.
- worked with teachers on applying for State Chapter 188 Horace Mann grants. Purpose: to pay them to take on extra after-school projects. Focus: direct services to students. Examples: one teacher will put together kits for parents, another will do weekend counseling with students at a local social service agency. Stipend: \$625-\$1250 for 25-50 hours. All five districts had more applications than funds: about 600 of 850 requests were granted.
- celebrated Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday enthusiastically. Many are taping "Eyes on the Prize" to use with older students.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND PERSONNEL ISSUES. BPS practice is to allow incompetent employees to retire rather than to fire them. Would this change if the superintendent was given the sole authority to make personnel decisions, instead of having to do so with the School Committee?
- CUSTODIANS' CONTRACT. Will the BPS hold firm and make custodians accountable to the school principal rather than to the area supervisor?

MAY 11 1987

IN FEBRUARY, 1987,

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- Δ
CEC
83
- appointed Stanley Swartz as Director of the newly-formed Campus Complex: Madison Park High, HHORC, Boston Tech. Job: first, to direct the merger of MP/HHORC and the move of Tech to the complex; later, to oversee the workings of the schools. One merger problem has been the name of the new school. Solution: students will name it. Tech remains Tech, an exam school.

Swartz is the former Headmaster, Dorchester High. Working under him: Robert Martin, formerly McCormack principal, as Headmaster, MP/HHORC, and Chris Lane, Headmaster, Tech.

- Feb
4/87
- compromised with the School Committee on transporting students to day care centers instead of home after school. The SC wanted immediate service for all grade K-8 students. Dr. Wilson proposed a pilot in six schools. Solution: immediate service for the six and for any school whose principal asks for it. Result: almost everyone happy---the principals' union may grieve the extra work.
 - opened---at the direction of the School Committee---an Assessment and Counseling Center for students who bring weapons to school. First offense: referral there for 3-10 days. Second offense: expulsion from BPS. Students will have a series of social, psychological, and educational tests, and if necessary, medical and psychiatric tests, as well as regular class work.
 - began plans to divvy up \$5.6M of State desegregation funds, traditionally used for "percs" such as performances in schools and for pairings with colleges, business, etc. For next year, \$ will target math, reading, bilingual students, teacher development, parent involvement, and at-risk students. Most paired institutions will receive fewer dollars.
 - accepted gratefully a \$1M gift to The Boston Plan for Excellence from Goodwin, Proctor, and Hoar. Significance: the money came from the partners, not from corporate profits. Interest will fund SEED, Support for Early Educational Development.
 - appointed his budget-planning Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):
 - James Darr, Private Industry Council
 - Charles Grigsby, Mass. Community Development Finance Corp.
 - Ramona Hilgenkamp, Education Loan Services
 - Ronald Homer, Boston Bank of Commerce
 - Wendy Puriefoy, The Boston Foundation
 - Miguel Satut, Associated Grantmakers
 - Robert Sperber, Boston University
 - William Spring, Federal Reserve Bank
 - Samuel Tyler, Boston Municipal Research Bureau.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- deserves praise for spending almost no time on personnel issues at their two meetings. At one, all personnel recommendations passed unanimously and with no discussion, a first.
- reversed their previous vote and approved the superintendent's school merger/consolidation plan. Changing votes were Casper, O'Bryant, Owens-Hicks, Wade.
- gave a 7% pay raise to their staffs. Each member now has \$46,000 to hire assistants/personal secretaries. BPS pays for an additional 5-person staff who takes minutes, maintains files, prepares papers, answers phones when SC aides are absent, etc.
- ordered a status report on whether the MBTA was providing the service they had agreed to. Problem: student/parent/school complaints about late buses, missed runs, etc.

THE SCHOOLS:

- handed out report cards and mailed "jeopardy notices" to all students in danger of failing for the year. Impact: lively discussion in the schools about whether such notices discourage or encourage students.
- gave, for the 2nd time this year, the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) test to students in grades 5, 8, & 12 who have yet to score the minimum needed to be promoted. Those who fail now will get special, intensive help before the test is next given in May.
- celebrated Black history month and held their science fairs.
- began a Zayre-funded assessment program. Done with the Mass. Advocacy Center, the program will train three teachers in each of 8 middle schools to develop a school self-evaluation team.

THE MAYOR:

- began his Alternative Education Initiative:

1. opened 19 new alternative education programs for 16-21 year old dropouts. Three---Jobs for Youth, ABCD, and Ecumenical and Social Action Center (ESAC)---will grant BPS diplomas because their curricula have been OKed. Eventual goal: all 19 will.

2. kicked off BACK-TO-SCHOOL programs in community schools. For 150 students under 16 who have unofficially dropped out, the goal is to do the needed catch-up work in the next 16-18 months to get them back into regular BPS classes. While in these programs, they are counted as BPS students.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

- THE BOSTON EDUCATION PLAN: Dr. Wilson's far-reaching proposals for Early Childhood Education and Adolescent Issues. Will the School Committee vote YES or NO?
- SCHOOL SYSTEM GOVERNANCE: Keep an eye on the Mayor, the City Council, and most of all, the School Committee.

CWEC

Citywide Educational Coalition
37 Temple Place | 542-2835
Boston, Massachusetts 02111
In March:

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED

MAY 11 1987

BPS in Brief

A monthly review of
issues affecting the
Boston Public Schools.

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- released BPS scores on the State Basic Skills Test, identifying students in grades 3, 6, and 9 who need help in reading, math, and writing. BPS scores were 4%-22% below state's. One in five BPS students needs reading help; statewide, about one in twelve does.

- presented the first two pieces of his Boston Education Plan. Highlights:

Adolescent Issues

- * a pilot health clinic in one high school but no contraceptives
- * a Student Support Team---of current staff---in each middle and high school to refer students to neighborhood health centers
- * "vigorous" implementation of the Kindergarten-grade 12 health curriculum which includes sex education
- * two new central staff to supervise these activities.

Early Childhood Education

- * mandatory school for four and five year olds
- * Early Learning Centers for all 4-7 year olds, with option of full day care. Each Center would be paired with a local corporation for building/playground renovations
- * new, "continuous progress" curriculum in place of the rigid kindergarten/grade 1 structure.

The School Committee is deliberating how to handle these and his recommendations on sixteen other issues which are scheduled to come to them in the next few weeks.

- submitted his FY88 preliminary budget figure to the mayor: \$335M, up \$40M from FY87. Major increases:
 - * teachers' contract: raises, class size changes, planning time...\$14.0M
 - * transportation: seat belts, bus monitors, 125 new buses.....6.8M
 - * increased private school tuitions for 872 Special Ed. students....4.1M
 - * raises for principals, administrators, other employees.....3.4M
 - * health and life insurance increases.....2.7M

This budget does not include Boston Education Plan costs, such as the Early Learning Centers.

- accepted the resignation of Rudolph Crew, Deputy for Curriculum and Instruction. The BPS has had five C & I deputies in six years.
- gave up on negotiating with the custodians and asked for mediation. Issues: contracting out cleaning services, giving principals responsibility for custodian evaluations. Union claims issues were raised after agreed-to deadline.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- under pressure from teachers and the union, voted to raise the age for kindergarten and grade 1 by four months. Their rationale: students are too young to handle work. Minority members voted NO, arguing that the problem was not the age of the children but rather what they were being asked to do.

THE SCHOOLS:

- held several citywide contests:
 - * Science Fair: 208 exhibitors, 109 winners. BPS sent 35 to the state fair at MIT and had 3 first place winners: 2 from Latin School, 1 from Latin Academy. Nine others won awards: 6 from Latin School, 2 from Latin Academy, 1 from Jamaica Plain High.
 - * Computer Contest. Winners: Boston Latin High School; Edwards Middle School, Farragut Elementary School.
- watched Boston Tech nearly win the boys' state basketball championship. Coach Gertrude Fisher's Tigers lost a heartbreaker, 58-59, to Wacoma High School in Palmer in the last game.
- mailed out exam school invitations for next fall:
 - * 577 to Latin School. Total applicants: 3,285
 - * 375 to Latin Academy. Total applicants: 3,180
 - * 627 to Boston Tech. Total applicants: 1,308.
- began formal evaluation of all teachers, due May 15. Principals rate teachers on organization, classroom management, etc., but not the progress of their students. Last year's results: 2,607 teachers were rated excellent; 1,938 satisfactory; and 20 unsatisfactory.
- applied enthusiastically for free tickets to take their students to Shakespeare, Symphony, Hans Christian Anderson and dozens of other performances. Sponsored by the Mass. Council on the Arts.

THE CITY COUNCIL:

- held hearings on the state of the schools. Recommendations expected soon. The Council has no control over the schools other than to approve additional money for their budget.

THE MAYOR:

- attended his first School Committee meeting in over two years.
- participated with School Committee officers, the Vault, and the Municipal Research Bureau in proposals for school improvement. His chief interest: parent participation.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

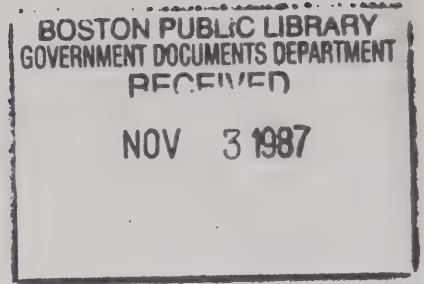
- The Custodians' Contract. For over ten years, various studies have recommended that custodians report to the principal instead of to their supervisor. Once again, the custodians are resisting, and may win because the BPS didn't put it on the table in time.
- Task Force on Student Assignment Recommendations. Few issues have as much potential for giving parents real power, i.e., the power to move their children from a school that is failing.

1
ccc
33

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS

I N B R I E F



JULY, AUGUST & SEPTEMBER,

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- negotiated tentative contracts with the three management companies who run school bus service. The old contracts expired in August; negotiations began in late July.

Goal: to shave \$2M from "roll-over" costs. Despite cuts---such as filling buses to capacity and reducing runs---budget will still exceed \$22M, or @ \$713/student/year.

Bus companies began negotiations with drivers' union in mid-August, two weeks before drivers' contract expired. Union had asked that talks begin in April.

At issue, full-time benefits for part-time work: 80%-100% paid health benefits, guaranteed 6-hour work day, pension plan.

Divisions within the BPS, within the School Committee and within the union resulted in Sept. 10's strike and the now-prolonged stalemate. No end in sight.

- named Charles Gibbons, principal of the award-winning Quincy, as District Superintendent in Area C/Dorchester.

- two weeks before school opened, promoted to principals:
Lorraine Bordonaro.....
.....P.Kennedy School
Edna Cason.....Mozart
Roger Harris.....R.Shaw
Clare Joyce.....Grew
Kim Marshall.....Mather
Cassandra Merriles.Emerson
Catalina Montes.....McKay
Mildred Ruiz.....Mackey
Bak Fun Wong.....Quincy

and moved 3 principals to other schools:
Thomas Clegg.....O'Donnell
Thomas Deveney.....Kenny
Neil Keohane.....Philbrick

All high schools have the same headmasters.

ISSUES TO WATCH...

Custodians' Contract:
unsettled for over a year. Will they now demand binding arbitration as the bus drivers have?

Student Assignment:
Will the School Committee and the superintendent seek out new plans or fine tune the old one?

- appointed Amanda Amis, Grew School principal, as Director of the Boston Education Plan. The Grew was recently profiled in Boston Magazine for excellence.

- wrapped up his Boston Education Plan with four final reports: Special Ed., Bilingual Ed., Voc. Ed., and Parent/Community Support. No major changes proposed, to the disappointment of constituency groups. School Committee may revise one or two reports

- convened a meeting at Freedom House for parents of minority students entering Latin School. His message: This is a hard school. Please help us by encouraging your child.

- opened the renovated Campus Complex, housing Madison Park, the HHORC, and Boston Tech. Most work was done on time. How? With much effort from BPS staff and with cooperation from City Hall on speeding up contracts. Even once-skeptical parents say it looks great, color-coded red, white and blue for the three schools.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- approved a Home Rule petition, HB 6037, that gives the superintendent power to hire all but six BPS employees: the Community Superintendents & the SC's Secretary.
NO: Casper, Grady, Walsh-Tomasini.

The bill, now at the State House, also forbids BPS over-spending and requires earlier budget deadlines.

- again balked at laying off teachers (22) with certifications the system cannot use. Final resolution: some took early retirement, others will be reassigned after retraining. A few remain as permanent subs.
- quietly OKed the BPS' controversial state Chapter 636 proposal, \$5.1M. Disagreement: the central office required that the \$ go for reading, writing and math. Schools were angry to lose programs (e.g., museum trips) they had had for years.
- kept an eye on their new policy to allow students to be dropped off at a bus stop near a day care center or babysitter's, rather than near home. Their simple, principal-managed policy has become entangled in the BPS bureaucracy.

THE SCHOOLS:

- addressed the Boston Education Plan. Central thrust: require much more reading time---setting aside all morning for reading, teaching reading in all subjects, adding 45 m. more of reading for at-risk students.

So far, response from the schools:

- * We are already doing much of this anyway.
- * We're trying, but it's tough to squeeze it all into the school day.
- * More may not be better; it may be too much.
- * We have merely renamed old programs.
- * The pressure is on. Some of it is healthy, but some is not.

What is off and running?

- * District A's Early Learning Center, with 6 a.m.-6 p.m. "surround" care, full rosters and waiting lists. The second pilot, in District C, is just getting started.
- * Two nationally known and "dynamite" consultants, hired for ongoing training for teachers in reading and writing strategies.
- * Compact Ventures, with a 3-person team working in each of 11 high schools to help grade 8 students make the transition to grade 9.

What remains? Two big issues: How does Court Street assure that what they mandate is bought into at the school level? Where is the time for team-building at each school?

- coped, as best they could, with the continuing bus drivers' strike. Many teachers and principals have put in extra hours: driving students, escorting them to & from MBTA stops, waiting for late pickups.

On strike day 14---Sept. 29---the BPS says overall attendance averaged 76%. Same day last year: 81%.

Severely handicapped students fare less well. The BPS estimates that about half are getting to school; advocates say it's closer to 25%.

THE FEDERAL COURT OF APPEALS:

- vacated part of Judge Garrity's 1985 final orders on student assignment and tentatively declared the BPS "unitary," as desegregated as it can be given demographics.

What does it mean? The BPS must maintain maximum desegregation, but no longer has to use the 1975 racial guidelines to assign students.

The decision opens the way for the BPS to draw up a student assignment plan with new rules.

THE MAYOR:

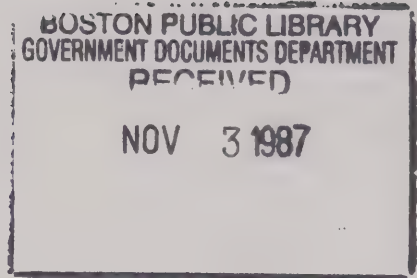
- funded Parents' Notebook, a monthly publication put together by CWEC and three parent groups: CPC, Bilingual & Special Needs PACs. Focus: information paired with strategies for action. Who gets it? All elementary school parents in the BPS.

△
CEC
33

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS

I N B R I E F



IN OCTOBER,

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- released the latest dropout report. The annual rate---how many students quit in a year---is down slightly: 2,778---13.9%---of Boston's 19,874 high school students dropped out in 1986-87. The previous year: 15.7%.

Those who dropped out were:	High schools were:
black.....48%	49%
white.....27%	27%
Hispanic..20%	16%
Asian.....5%	9%

Dropouts were 43% female, 57% male.

High schools with worst rates: Jamaica Plain, Dorchester, South Boston, Boston High & Brighton.

Also figured: the cohort rate---how many grade 9 students fail to graduate four years later: 46.14%, higher than last year's 43.6%.

How many did graduate in June? About 2,700.

Why are they dropping out? Most frequently listed by counselors is "over 16." The BPS does not require any more specific answer.

- met with:
 - * the Mayor, the Private Industry Council, the Coordinating Committee, and the Boston Municipal Research Bureau to begin discussions on the next five years of the Boston Compact.

- * each high school headmaster individually to review how their Student Services Office will be set up.

- * minority vendors to encourage them to do business with the BPS.

- struggled with the bus drivers' strike which ended after 30+ days. Unresolved issues will go to binding arbitration: pay, medical insurance, sick days, pension plan. Gap between what the union wants and the BPS offered: \$1.9M.

One hot issue---whether the drivers should be made public employees---has been put on the back burner.

- continued to negotiate the three other unsigned contracts, all of which expired in August, 1986. Sticking points: custodians (450) don't want to report to or be evaluated by the principal

attendance officers (11) want a 6.5% pay raise, not the 5.5% almost everyone else got. Teachers got 6.5%.

some planning & engineering staff (25) ---those who decide what repairs are needed---want a paid, 30-minute lunch.

- again appealed the U.S. Dept. of Ed.'s rejection of Boston's \$4M magnet school proposal, ranked 84th because of a "poorly designed management plan and excessive costs." Appeal denied.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

Lame-duck School Committee moves: At least three incumbents will not return.

Changing the student assignment plan: When will the School Committee and superintendent get moving?

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- ran for re-election, holding only one meeting. Who won't be back? Joe Casper, Kevin McCluskey, Shirley Owens-Hicks for certain. John Nucci's seat is up for grabs as he runs citywide.

Three of six other district incumbents are unchallenged.

- spent most of their one meeting on transportation problems:

day care dropoff is still not clicking. By mid-October---8 months after the Committee asked for a policy---only 25 students were getting the service. The problem:

- * miscommunication between the Committee & superintendent, between the BPS & parents
- * bureaucratization of a designed-to-be simple policy
- * conflicting priorities: very important for working parents, less so for the system.

budget cuts, recommended by the superintendent and OKed by the Committee, are having a belated and visible impact---crowded buses, longer rides, fewer monitors. Parents are angry, and the Committee is feeling the heat.

Resolution: call a special meeting on transportation, after the elections.

THE SCHOOLS:

- coped with the bus drivers' strike:

attendance: 5,849 students (one in four who takes a yellow bus to school) did not get there at all until the strike ended October 13.

remediation: schools have been directed to help students make up the work, with at least 8 hours of extra help. Many teachers are giving up their planning time to hold catch-up classes.

- gave two major tests: State Basic Skills Test for grades 3, 6, and 9. Test assesses individual skills & points out gaps. Results in January.

Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) measures how difficult the material is that a student can read. Minimum DRP score is required for promotion from grades 5, 8, & 12.

- attended an all-day Professional Day, some run by the district, some by the school. Reviews: good workshops, good to catch up with colleagues, good to take a break from school. Needed: more coordination and followup.
- sent selected staff off to four days of workshops in reading and writing, as called for in the Boston Education Plan. Trickle-down strategy: they would go back to their schools and train everyone else. Problem: no time budgeted for school-based training.

THE MAYOR:

- added another \$30M to the schools' capital improvement pot, bringing the total set aside for major repairs to an unprecedented \$147M. Who will manage? City's Public Facilities Dept.
- backed by the School Committee and superintendent, talked the bus drivers' union into accepting binding arbitration.

JUDGE MORSE:

- of Suffolk Superior Court, named Jane Edmonds as Special Master for special needs transportation. Her job: to get those students to school, regardless.

The judge blasted the BPS: "What you don't have and what you really need is outrage from the School Committee over this situation."

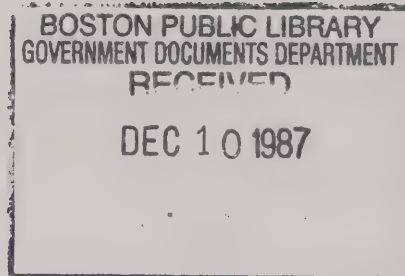
By strike's end, 528 of 7,000+ special needs students were being bused to school.

Parents have asked that the Special Master stay and that special needs transportation be turned over to a court-ordered receiver.

The BPS has asked that the Special Master be withdrawn now that the strike is over. No decision yet.

△
CEC
83

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BPS
IN BRIEF



IN NOVEMBER,

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- worked on ways to staff & fund the after-school remediation classes to begin in January:
- * ready to go: a pilot at the Baldwin Elementary School offering state-funded Chapter 1 classes one hour before school starts. So far, all 28 students invited want to come.
- * almost ready to go: 48 Horace Mann teachers, funded by Chapter 188, to run after-school reading classes at selected schools four days a week. Who is eligible? 3,800 at-risk students in grades 4-8. Number of slots: 600.
- * still in the planning: ways to use other staff---from Chapter 1, Chapter 636, etc.---to run classes but any change in working conditions has to get past the teachers' union.
- began in-school remediation for 3,000 grade 1-8 students who were absent during bus drivers' strike: 8 hours of extra classes, replacing art, music, recess, etc. Taught by teachers who volunteered to give up their newly-won planning & development time. How much school did kids miss? About 132 hours.

- released 1987 SAT scores, down slightly and averaging 150 points lower than seniors nationwide.

BPS median:

Verbal...352 Math...405

Possible: optional SAT Prep courses, run by BPS on Saturdays for grades 10-12.

- named his FY89 budget's Technical Advisory Comm.:
James Darr....State St. Bank
Charles Grigsby..Mass. Comm. Development Finan. Corp.
Ramona Hilgenkamp..Education Loan Services
Wendy Puriefey.....Boston Foundation
Miguel Satut.....Associated Grantsmakers
Robert Sperber..Boston Univ.
William Spring..Fed. Reserve
Samuel Tyler.....Municipal Research Bureau

ISSUES TO WATCH:

Dr. Wilson's evaluation: to be done by the Committee in public session, a first. When? Dec. 10.

School Committee presidency: A battle brewing. New members hold swing votes. Candidates: Browne, Nucci, O'Bryant. Election: Jan. 4.

- gratefully accepted a \$1.5M windfall: federal reimbursement for bilingual programs that the BPS had applied for years ago. Before the check, BPS was running \$2.8M overbudget; now down to \$1.3M. Part of overrun: Dr. Wilson had promised but never made \$1.3M in budget cuts. Spending level: \$325.9M.

Up in cost: special ed. tuitions, bus insurance, utilities. Down: transportation. BPS spent \$.97M on the strike but saved \$1.21M. Gain: \$.24M

- reviewed an in-house report on the transfer-out rate of new students at the exam schools. Latin Academy and Latin School lose 6% and Tech, 3%. Who leaves? It varies. The highest %: Latin Academy: 8% of new white students transfer out Latin School: Hispanic (11%) and black (9%) Tech: Hispanic (9%). Coming: a fuller study.

- learned that the BPS lost its appeal to have the court-ordered Special Needs Transportation Master removed. Jane Edmonds will stay until Judge Morse ends her role.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- ran for office, and most made it. New faces:
 - * Gerald Anderson, of Dorchester, minister, Abbott Church of Christ
 - * Kitty Bowman, Brighton, Boston Tech parent
 - * Robert Cappucci, East Boston, Asst. V.P., BayBanks/Harvard
 - * Peggy Davis-Mullen, South Boston, BPS parent and law student.

SC remains 9 white, 4 black; women gain one seat, up to 6. Four members are bachelors, three are BPS parents.

Not returning: Joseph Casper, William Donlan, Kevin McCluskey, Shirley Owens-Hicks.

- circled, but did not catch, a new student assignment plan. The Committee:
 - * scheduled, then cancelled, public hearings
 - * said the supt's proposal would not be considered, then said it might
 - * finally OKed a January workshop with the superintendent to iron out what they want and who will write the plan.

What are their options? To modify the supt's plan or to write a whole new plan.

Meanwhile, Dr. Wilson sent signals that he's willing to change his original plan. Why? Parent & community criticism of some parts. Stay tuned.

THE SCHOOLS:

- had their first uneventful month of the school year: no strikes, no crises, few directives, no regrets.
- sent home second notices--- this time in nine languages ---about day care transportation. So far, 424 parents have asked for the service and 308 have gotten it.
- implemented more of the Boston Education Plan:
 - * reading: All morning is being spent on reading and writing. More difficult: to squeeze another 45-minute reading class out of the day for failing students and to find staff to teach it. Another problem: students are missing math and science when they're in reading classes.
 - * staff development: happening, but in spurts. In theory, a "ripple effect": train one teacher, who trains others, who train others, etc. In fact: little time at the schools to do the training or offer ongoing help.

- * U.S.S.R.---silent reading for everyone, even the custodian--and Read Aloud programs are continuing or are beginning. Many schools have had both for several years.

THE SCHOOLS (continued)

- began to ask questions--- through principal subcommittees---about other parts of the Boston Education Plan. Top of their agenda: the logistics of January's after-school classes: Where? When? Staffing? Transportation? Voluntary or mandatory? Will all schools have programs? If not, what about those students?
- rankled at the news that renovations to the Campus Complex included \$100K+ to create four administrators' offices and a conference room. Who OKed it? The city's Public Facilities and BPS Planning & Engineering Offices.

Also angry: parents and teachers who say their requests to repair leaky roofs and broken windows go unheeded. Excuse: \$\$\$.

THE MAYOR:

- spoke in favor of changing the student assignment plan and empowering parents at CWEC's Annual Meeting. Equally important: he stayed for the panel discussion on how to do it

CWEC:

- gave Golden Apple awards to 15 outstanding BPS teachers. Response: "This is the best thing that has happened to me in all my years of teaching!"

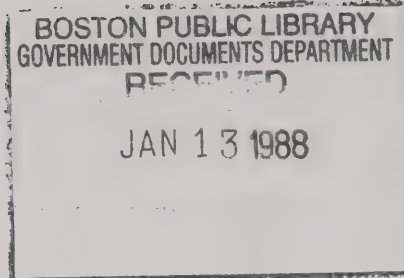
The prizes: Waterford crystal stars, dinners at Pier 4. Funding from Bank of Boston, Boston Teachers' Union, Chamber of Commerce, IBM and Neiman-Marcus.

A
CEC
33

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS

I N B R I E F



IN DECEMBER, 1987:

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- dug BPS heels in on custodians' contract negotiations. Still no agreement 16 months after it expired.

The union charged--and an arbitrator ruled--that BPS had put two new items on table after deadline:

- * to have custodians report to principals
- * to hire private crews for some custodial work.

BPS argued that they were counter-proposals. Fallout? The BPS may have to wait until 1989. An appeal is in the works.

Later, BPS tried to get union to accept a quickie contract for 1986-1987, sweetening the offer with a 5.5% raise. Why? To get new contract talks going and include the two issues. Union response: no way.

- interviewed for the biggest Golden Apple Award: chancellor of NYC's schools. One of eight semi-finalists but not of three finalists.

Who got it? The superintendent of Minneapolis' 39,000-student school system, Richard Green.

- wrangled with the Herald over its story & editorial about his use of city VISA card. Paper implied misuse. He argues that the story is misleading and "approaching libel."

Dr. Wilson demanded a front-page retraction and hinted at a lawsuit. Herald is standing firm.

In all, @\$15,000 in charges: travel, meals, etc., for him and staff, all agreed to in contract. Other expenses in two years: @\$22,000 for apt. while waiting to move, for closing costs on two houses & for moving fees.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

The School Committee:

After a divisive election for officers, will they all pull together and focus on setting educational policy?

- read the Jorgensen Report, a city-funded study of school facilities.

Finding: all are in "state of disrepair" from poor management & underfunding. All of the \$8M yearly budget is spent on emergencies and on maintenance contracts.

Recommended---BPS should:

- * set standards for what will and won't be accepted.
- * budget to prevent problems.
- * face up to the fact that some schools may have to close. BPS has 192 sq.ft./student. National average: 138 sq.ft.
- * reorganize the Planning & Engineering Office.
- * hire in-house repair staff---carpenters, plumbers, etc.---instead of using all private contractors.
- * have all schools checked by experienced inspectors.
- * write a maintenance plan for each school and stick to it.

What will it cost to get schools up to par?

\$22M/year for cyclical work (replacing old windows)
+13M/year for maintenance (fixing broken windows)
\$35M/year total.

P.S. These estimates are over and above the \$147M set aside by the city in 1985 to fix what's already broken.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- evaluated Dr. Wilson, for the second time. Final grade: 4 on a scale of 1-5.

Ten of 13 members gave him a perfect score for his:

- * willingness to make decisions and take stands
- * aggressiveness about improving the schools
- * good relationship with the business community
- * attire and grooming.

Other high scores for:

- * taking initiative
- * staying informed on educational issues
- * accepting responsibility
- * facing controversy
- * maintaining poise
- * writing clearly.

Lowest scores were for:

- * accepting criticism
- * being accessible to parents and community
- * using talents of community & staff in curriculum work
- * responding promptly to questions and requests.

The very lowest for his:

- * relationship with parents, teachers & other staff.

- was lobbied by colleagues seeking the presidency. Election: Jan. 4.

[And the winner is...John Nucci, with 7 out of 13 votes. Four of the seven were from the new members. Six of the nine incumbents split votes between Abigail Browne and John O'Bryant.

For V.P.: John Grady of Hyde Park with nine votes. The battle for Treasurer took four ballots. Winner: Jean McGuire.]

THE SCHOOLS:

- did their major planning for the coming school year, with principals, teachers and some parents drafting the annual budget requests:

- * for facilities. Often a futile exercise, but this marks the first year that the requests will be forwarded to the head of facilities. Newly-hired Bill McAfee plans to catalog the need and build a case for more money.

- * for books & supplies: \$81-\$86/student. Principal and staff get to buy what they need, with no strings. This year, more \$\$\$ were free for goodies because they didn't buy reading texts: a single basal is coming from above.

- * for staffing. For middle & high schools, a time to assess which programs work and which don't, and change course. Little impact in elementary schools.

Problem: some parts of the Boston Education Plan are putting the squeeze on already tight budgets. For example, each Student Services Office requires a staff person but no extra staff is funded or assigned. No easy answers.

- learned that five middle schools were picked to house alternative programs for disruptive students.

Reaction from chosen principals: mixed, mostly negative. Why? Not all are convinced this is the right approach & some resent being given other schools' problems.

- spread holiday cheer, performing at nursing homes, banks, City Hall. BPS kids also dug deep and came up with a record \$14,500+ for Globe Santa.

Santa even visited the Fuller School, bringing brand-new hats & mittens to each student, thanks to parent-raised funds.

- learned that 25 lucky 8th graders will win full scholarships to BC when they graduate from high school in June, 1992.

The tradeoff: they'll have to keep up their grades and go to Saturday classes. Who's eligible? Incoming freshmen at West Roxbury & Hyde Park Highs.

BC's model: NYC's Eugene Lang. He guarantees scholarships for graduates of one NYC middle school.

THE LEGISLATURE:

- passed---and the governor signed---HB 6037, AKA "School Committee Reform." Effective immediately. Impact:

- * All personnel power goes to the superintendent. The Committee will hire (and fire) only seven: the superintendent, their secretary, and the five district supts.

One exception: teacher firing needs Committee approval.

- * Budget timetable is moved up: to the Mayor no later than March 23 and from him to the City Council by May 11, 1988.

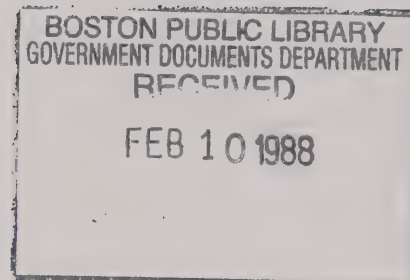
Strategists for bill: Municipal Research Bureau.

△
CEC
83

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS

I N B R I E F



IN JANUARY, 1988

THE SUPERINTENDENT

- picked one basal reader series, part of his Boston Education Plan.

What's a basal? A 1988 version of "Dick & Jane." Students move through the series as skills improve.

And the winner is...
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
Pricetag: @\$1.1M.

Until now, each school could pick one series from a list of 5-7. In September, everyone will use HBJ through grade 8.

Pro: consistency for a system where students move around, and BPS students *do*.

Con: top down mandate limits teachers' professional discretion.

Not clear yet: what will happen to old books? Can teachers keep and use them?

- had staff accept invitations from parents & community groups to talk about student assignment.

Everything on hold until early March, at SC request. They'll debate process in late Feb. and hold hearings in March.

- planned after-school reading classes for students in grades 4-8 who are behind.

Preliminary numbers:
6,592 students eligible, or
34% of all gr. 4-8 students,
including exam schools.
517 teachers needed.

In many middle schools, 50%+
of the students will be eligible.

What will it cost?
\$681,371 for 37 one-hour
classes, March-May.

Broken down:
\$18,415/hour or
\$2.79/hour/student, if all
6,592 students show up.

A full year would cost \$1.7M.
To add grades 9-12 would
double the cost: \$3.4M/year.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

After School Classes:
Results
Cost Effectiveness
Parents' Response

Next Year's Budget:
Will the Mayor and City Council accept a 10% increase? If not, who or what gets cut?

- estimated FY89 budget at \$356.7M, up 10%. Adding in state & federal funds, BPS would be spending \$400M+, up \$100M in three years.

Biggest increases:

- * Boston Education Plan.....up \$ 5.5M
- * Raises & Staff OKed in contracts.....up \$18.0M
- * Transportation.....up \$ 2.3M
- * Benefits.....up \$ 2.7M
- * Special Education Tuitions.....up \$ 3.0M

Missing: major increase for Alterations & Repairs. State Board is holding BPS to its obligation to raise A&R budget, now \$8M.

If not upped, State is threatening no city reimbursement for millions spent for roofs, boilers, etc. Also: Latin School renovations in jeopardy.

- got his BAC, TAC & SAC [Budget, Technical & Supt.'s Advisory Committees] going. Job: advise on final budget.
- filed a bill to allow state reimbursement for school "Alterations & Repairs": regular maintenance projects.

Included a clause giving \$\$\$ priority to eight districts including -- you guessed it -- Boston.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- held its first meeting since the Home Rule petition was signed. Under new rules: no personnel items, no contracts on the agenda.

The hope: that they'll focus on setting policy.

What did they do?

Struggled with some big issues -- transportation woes, monthly budget reporting format, etc. -- but weren't sure what to do with them.

Example: they talked about who should set standards to measure school performance, but set up no process to set standards themselves.

- heard parents plead for Committee review of BPS policy on bus monitors, following a well-publicized rape on a bus that should have had a monitor but didn't.

Response: The superintendent will prepare a report.

- *did not* schedule the special transportation meeting they have promised since November.
- *did* schedule their long-awaited "working session" with the superintendent on student assignment, open to the public. It'll be a two-day sleepover, in late February, in *Dedham*.

THE SCHOOLS:

- talked about *the issue*: the planned after-school remediation classes. Principals have *lots* of questions.

The biggest: staffing. Many teachers don't want to work after school; they have kids, jobs, classes. What if principals can't convince enough staff to sign up? Who will teach their students?

Another concern: the students, especially whether or not they'll come & how and when they'll get home.

Example: magnet school students come from all over Boston. Will the BPS send students home on one bus to save money or divvy them up into several to save time?

Another: materials. Schools are getting none.

- sent some social studies teachers to a workshop on teaching reading. Why social studies? The 45-minutes more of reading required in the Boston Ed Plan will be done in their classes.

Problem to be resolved: resentment of teachers who see this as a dual task -- having to teach reading *and* social studies.

- celebrated Martin Luther King Day and geared up for Black History Month in February.

- learned what had been a well-kept secret: that schools can get free, used furniture from a city-run warehouse. Corporations donate, schools pick up.

Schools compare it to Christmas: the hand-me-downs boost morale and bring cheers from staff. Teachers now have desks with drawers and chairs with wheels, many for the first time.

One teacher replaced an old desk that had only 3 legs -- the 4th was propped up on books.

[Want the secret number? Call CWEC!]

MASS ADVOCACY CENTER:

- released its analysis of BPS non-promotion rate:
 - * 6,350 (11.4%) of all BPS students were not promoted last year. National rate: 4%-5%.
 - * 1 in 4 ninth graders was not promoted, and 1 in 5 first graders.
 - * more than 570 students have been in the same grade three years, a violation of promotion policy.
 - * Highest numbers of non-promotes: grades 7 and 9.

They recommend that the BPS:

- * re-think remediation programs
- * allow school staff to design remediation
- * build in *real* parent involvement.

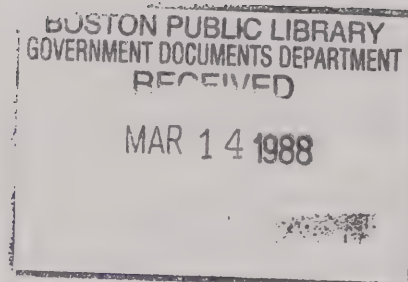
No public response yet from superintendent or School Committee.

△
CEC
83

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS

I N B R I E F



IN FEBRUARY 1988

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- finally settled the custodians' contract. The BPS won:
 - * *accountability*. Custodians must now report to and be evaluated by the principal. Startup: 9/88.

- * *affirmative action*. Last hurdle cleared. BPS can now hire from both white and minority civil service lists. Right now, senior custodians are 94% white; juniors, 80%. Only 2% of all 451 are women.

The union won:

- * *big bucks*. They'll make \$23K-\$32K this year, plus \$20/hour overtime.

Even better: raises are retroactive to 9/86. They're watching the mail: most will get a back pay check of \$6K+.

- * *What else?* Six weeks of vacation for long-term employees, more personal days, and *toolboxes*, a first. No clue yet as to contents.
- froze schools' unspent supplies and xerox funds, in face of \$700K deficit. They may get it back if the \$\$\$ can be found. Smart principals spend it all early in the year.

- released Research Dept.'s study of Project Promise, now at three middle schools.

Findings: "very favorable." High marks from staff for teacher decision-making, flexible scheduling, planning time, longer school day. Not-so-high, but not negative, marks for Saturday classes. Achievement? Too soon to tell.

Students said they are learning more, but don't like the longer day. Keep in mind: 12-16 year olds don't admit to liking much of anything.

- set aside, for the time being, district-initiated efforts to plan a "model" school for next year. At stake: they may lose Regents' planning money.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

BPS budget debate will overwhelm all other issues in March.

The superintendent wants at least \$35M more. The city only has \$50M to divvy up among all departments.

- told middle school principals they may have to drop staff: their Director of Instruction and/or Instructional Support Teacher for next year, positions both won in hard-fought battles in 1983.

Principals say both are critical. One evaluates and supports teachers; the other cuts red tape, ferrets out resources and acts as staff cheerleader.

Why the cuts? Rumored: To hire bus monitors for special needs vehicles.

Latest estimates of FY89 budget: \$365M, up from \$325M.

- released results of last fall's State Basic Skills Tests. Purpose: identify grade 3, 6 & 9 students who need extra help in reading, writing & arithmetic. Mass: @ 92% passed. BPS: @ 80% passed.

Most bilingual and special needs students are exempt.

Why so low? BPS blames the bus drivers' strike. Another complaint: the state's scoring method. Systems with high absenteeism suffer.

BPS had lots of no-shows -- eligible students who were never tested -- though the state allows 6 weeks for testing and makeup tests.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- camped out at the plush Endicott Estate in Dedham to work on student assignment.

Topics:

- * how it now works, and doesn't;
- * how the BPS got into and out of the deseg case.

Present: all but Peggy Davis-Mullen. Joe Casper showed up, but alone. He had threatened to bring busloads of parents.

How was it? Polite. At the end, they were back at square one: looking at what the Task Force recommended *one year ago*.

The next step... still unclear. Time's a-wasting: to do it right, they should have a plan ready for the required 90-day review no later than July 1.

- OK'd the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich basal reader. Cost: \$1.3M now + .5M/ year after.

Revealed: one of the basal's writers also wrote part of the Met Test. Was that a factor in the supt.'s decision to pick HBJ? He says yes.

FYI: HBJ owns Shamu the whale.

- wrestled with how to keep up with what's going on, now that they don't approve personnel and contracts. Stay tuned: They're working with the supt. on a reporting format.

THE SCHOOLS:

- launched the after-school remediation program for students with low Met Test scores in grades 4-8.

By month's end, day 5:

- * Students: they're coming, though no hard figures yet. Most were told they *have* to come though the BPS quietly admits it can't be enforced, legally.

Under consideration: inviting other students recommended by the teachers.

- * Principals: Some are grateful for *any* remedial help. Others say give us the \$\$\$ and we'll do it *our* way.

Nagging concern... increasing emphasis on raising Met scores. How many real books do kids get to read?

Another: at middle school, *any* teacher can sign up... even a shop teacher. No training, materials or other help is budgeted. Principals' fear: the program may have too many worksheets and too little fun.

Transportation? Schools say it has been knock-on-wood reliable.

- celebrated with great enthusiasm Black History month: plays, speakers, assemblies.
- had an otherwise typical month, with snow days, report cards, open houses and

school vacation.

One, the Winship, had a surprise visitor: New Zealander Don Holdaway, father of the "whole language" reading method. First graders had written him about how much they liked the program, and he dropped in to read aloud!

Another school visitor: Margaret Thatcher's policy advisor.

THE BOSTON TEACHERS' UNION:

- denied a fired teacher's request to go to arbitration, the first time ever. Still needed: a full membership vote.

CWEC:

- published its study of teachers' views of curriculum reform.

Who was interviewed? Almost all BPS 9th grade math and English teachers and department heads.

What were the findings? They like the *idea* of curriculum objectives but still have a lot of problems. The implementation plan, they say, was never followed.

[Call for a copy of *BPS Focus*, 542-2835.]

APR 16 1988

IN MARCH 1988

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- put in long hours on the big one: the budget. At the start, the FY89 estimate was \$362.1M. By month's end, it had reached \$368.2M, and by April's start, it was back down to \$364.6M. In between, the mayor said he'd OK \$350M.

For FY88,
the BPS got\$324.6M
but really spent.....\$328.6M

For FY89, the sup't
started with..... \$328.6M
and added \$\$ for:
* salaries/benefits.....up + 29.5M
* private school fees for
890 sped students...up + 2.8M
* transportation..... up + 2.8M
* new basal readers..... + 1.3M
\$365.0M

Then, he took out..... - 5.0M
to get it down to..... \$360.0M

How? Cuts in central staff, insurance and the reserve account.

Who's out? One high-up facilities slot, a move that may make "professionalizing" the staff harder, as recommended in the Jorgenson Report. Also: two top slots in Research, including the Testing & Evaluation head.

Also dropped: \$\$\$ for lunch monitors.

After that, the Committee added sped bus monitors..... + 2.1M
First draft \$362.1M

Not bad, right? But... \$5.3M was missing: funds for after-school remediation, Project Promise & the lunch monitors. The sup't's game plan: get the state and feds to assume all these costs.

The Committee balked and asked him to get promises first. When he couldn't, they had two choices: cut the budget or up it.

They upped it.....+ 5.3M
and added another.....+ .8M
Second Draft \$368.2M

Two weeks later...
the Committee cut
* central staff.....- .9M
* middle & high school
teachers.....- 1.8M
* their own personal staffs.....- .1M
* other savings.....- .4M

and put off adding more staff
to high school Student Services
Offices, saving.....- 2.0M
The budget was then \$363.0M

Then they added..... + 1.6M
for repairs. The state had insisted the BPS & city commit more money or lose reimbursement \$\$\$ for future projects, e.g. the Latin Schools.

When the fog cleared, the budget was\$364.6M
Forecast remains cloudy.
They voted to ask for no less than \$360M and will have to consider more cuts.

The sup't has hinted at some:
* drop additional sped monitors
* halve schools' supplies money
* close Another Course to College, Boston Prep and the Barron Assessment Center
* and, perhaps, lay off teachers.

The Committee has hinted it may:
* cut 10% across-the-board in many central departments
* put more kids on the MBTA
* consolidate high schools
* keep just one Project Promise school -- the Timilty -- and make it a citywide magnet.

THE SUPERINTENDENT ALSO:

- mailed to all principals a school-by-school ranking of last year's Metropolitan Test scores based on grades 5, 8 & 12. Those with low scores may be "called into the office" to meet with him, his top guns, and the district sup't.

Principals' reaction: anger. Why? They say...

- * ranking a whole school based on one grade's scores is unfair:
continued...

ISSUES TO WATCH:

Still, the budget.

Where will \$4.6M more come from? Lay-offs? Program cuts?

And... who will make the recommendations?

THE SUPERINTENDENT [cont.]

even kids new to the school -- those who started in grade 5, e.g. -- are included.

Some principals say a "cohort" study -- a measure of how the kids who started in *grade 1* did by *grade 5* -- would be more fair.

- * High/low Met scores may not predict high/low State Basic Skills Tests scores. Twenty-two of 76 BPS elementary schools did *above* average on one test and *below* average on the other.

- * the Met is meant to compare school *systems*, not *schools*.

Principals & teachers fear the next step: that their jobs will hinge on their Met scores.

- finally settled the bus drivers' contract, with arbitration. Drivers won a 6.5% raise; BPS kept a 5-hour -- not 6 -- minimum work day. They'll make \$7K-\$11K, plus overtime and summer unemployment.

Only other group to get 6.5%: teachers, the extra 1% paid for with state \$\$\$.

THE MAYOR:

- named CWEC's director, the indefatigable Ellen Guiney, as his education advisor. Starting date: April 6. Good move, Mr. Mayor!

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ALSO:

- cast a rare vote against the sup't on policy: approving a motion to give alternative program directors -- who run off-site classes for at-risk students -- the authority to exempt them from the attendance requirements, with discretion.

The sup't wanted the power kept solely with each student's home school principal.

- heard a powerful coalition -- Black Educators' Alliance, Bilingual PAC, BTU, CPC, CWEC, Freedom House, Mass Advocacy, NAACP, Special Needs PAC and the Urban League -- urge them to exercise leadership and to get moving on student assignment. No response.

Progress since the Dedham workshop: minimal. Public hearings *may* be coming in May. Unanswered: on what?

THE SCHOOLS:

- got their Met Test booklets, to be given in May. How the booklets are handled is up to each principal. In many schools, getting ready for the Met is the #1 priority.

Why so important? The rankings plus:

- * invitations to both accelerated & remedial classes
- * promotion from grades 1, 5, 8 & 12, beginning in 1990.
- ran into a roadblock with the buses. The Registry called a mid-day inspection of yellow buses used for corner-to-corner service and took many off the road for major & minor safety violations.

Students were stranded at school & parents were panicked. Some staff ended up taking kids home.

Who's in charge? The BPS contracts with a private firm to transport kids, hire drivers and repair buses. The bill this year: \$10.3M, including \$800K for repairs.

One problem: the average age of the fleet is 8 years. Good news: the FY89 budget has, so far, \$1.4M to start replacing them.

- got the what & how on the state's Carnegie School grant program: funds to pilot real school-based decision-making. Winning schools' staffs design and try methods to run the school themselves, free from certain legal/contractual restraints.

Example: a school might run 8am-5pm, offer different approaches to learning, and use teams of part-time teachers to staff it.

Enthusiastic response from BPS schools, says the state. State-wide, 30 grants will be awarded.

- figured *two* different books/supplies budgets for next year: one at the current \$81-\$86 per student, and one at what may be coming, \$55-\$71.

The sup't says elementary & middle schools will need less \$\$\$ because they'll be getting new basal readers, paid for with central \$\$\$.

The old basals? Not so old, many were bought just last year. Cuts could mean that some schools will have new basals, old basals, and no science equipment.

- learned who won SEED grants for early childhood. The winners: the Agassiz & the Trotter to pilot Whole Language programs.

How much? \$150,000 over two years. Source: interest from Goodwin, Proctor & Hoar's \$1M grant to BPS.

MAY 17 1988

IN APRIL, 1988

EVERYONE:

- worked on the budget. What's the problem? The growing gap between BPS expenses and city revenues.

How much does the BPS need? Hard to figure. A "roll-over" budget would cost \$355M, up from this year's \$324.6M. But... the BPS actually *spent* \$328.6M, boosting the rollover to \$359M. Other costs---including the Boston Ed Plan---upped it to \$368.2M.

On April 5, the School Committee got it down to \$364.6M with promises to go lower, but no lower, some said, than \$360M.

On April 13, the mayor submitted a request to the City Council for \$350M.

On April 26, the supt laid out \$14.6M in possible cuts:

- ✓ close the ACC, Boston Prep & Barron Assessment Center
- ✓ cut schools' supplies & staff
- ✓ chop most of the about-to-be added monitors for sped buses
- ✓ drop \$\$\$ for at-risk programs
- ✓ pare down parents' council \$\$\$
- ✓ close one high school
- ✓ cut odds & ends, here & there.

With only \$350M to spend, the SC had to shop carefully. Rather than lay off teachers & close schools, the SC opted to:
✓ drop some parts of the Boston Ed Plan. Most imp't: after-school reading classes (\$1.3M).

- ✓ shave \$1M from the \$2.6M set aside for sped bus monitors
- ✓ put on the T the 7,000 kids in gr. 6-12 who still take a bus.
- ✓ drop Project Promise from three schools to one, the Timilty
- ✓ veto the supt's move to set up clusters for "disruptive" middle school students
- ✓ cut what they could with least impact on students.

What about the basal reader? It's been in & out, but is back in again. Books should be here by Sept.

At last count: \$354.5M. Mayor is still holding out for \$350M.

Looking back...

City warned the BPS of limited funds in January.

Looking ahead...

Waning city revenues & fallout from Prop 2 1/2 may make this an annual crisis.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

The never-ending budget... \$5M+ to go & no new recommendations in sight...

School funding, a state-wide crisis. Where will new revenues come from? Should Boston override Prop 2 1/2?

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- got his first R & D report on how his Boston Ed Plan is doing. Findings: on schedule.

High marks for writing folders, Early Learning Centers, Boston Prep & Compact Ventures.

Low: math, Professional Development Center, safety, curriculum---no \$\$\$ were ever requested.

- prepared arguments to try to get out of sped court case, now 11 yrs. old. BPS says it's in compliance.

Advocates & activists say "Not so." E.g., court requires 90% of evaluations be done in 30 days. To date, only 60% have.

- proposed the city fund a \$48M bond issue for school repairs, paid back with new airplane fuel & hotel taxes. Little response from powers that be.
- linked up with the state for intense AIDS education before school is out. Why? 20% of patients were infected as teens.

- handed in state Chapter 636 mega-proposal for more than \$6M. Most of the \$\$\$ go to schools for programs.

Same process as last year: supt named priorities & prototypes.

Missing this year: uproar from parents & schools about their lack of input.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- joined forces, tentatively, with the BTU, CPC, CWEC, Mass Advocacy & others to work on budget problems.

Pres. Nucci asked for help in getting more money. Agreed: groups will talk with the Mayor but made no promises.

- began to move on student assignment. Coming in late May: public meetings to hear what parents want in a new plan & how they like the supt's proposal.

THE SCHOOLS:

- began to see the effect of last month's budget cuts. Middle & high schools had to pick 1-3 teachers to cut, many in major subject areas. In some, class size will go up by several students.

Also cut...the promise of a full-time nurse for every middle school: 14 of the 22 will have only part-time coverage.

- geared up for summer jobs for high school students. PIC specialists ran "get-a-job-and-keep-it" workshops on interviews, resumes, etc.

In return for good grades & attendance, kids get chance at one of 3,100 jobs with almost 700 companies through the Compact. Average pay: \$6/hr. plus, maybe, an after-school job in the fall.

- prepped for the DRP reading test. Students in grades 5, 8 & 12 get three chances to pass it or they're not promoted. Those who need help can take DRP classes at night.

THE SCHOOLS (cont.):

- also got ready for May's Met Tests, with drills, practice tests, confidence-boosting pep talks with students.
- took part in 20 principal screenings: staff & parents interviewed applicants and made a recommendation to supt.

In most cases, the *acting* principal---hand-picked by the supt to fill a vacancy in the last year---was the number 1 choice.

- wrapped up year-long teacher evaluations, done by principal or dept. head. Most closely scrutinized: first grade, first year & new-to-the-school teachers. All staff gets a face-to-face & written report.

Last year...
2,619 were rated Excellent
1,867 Satisfactory
18 Unsatisfactory.

- celebrated the successes of colleagues & kids:
 - ✓ The Haley's Bob Berry was named Mass. Outstanding Principal, the BPS' first ever winner
 - ✓ Mary Grassa O'Neill of the Timilty is now officially one of the country's "100 Outstanding Educational Administrators"
 - ✓ District C's Charlie Gibbons won a national public relations award *and* sat in on a photo session with the President.
 - ✓ BPS students competed for citywide typing, computer, science, math & spelling contests. Well done!

THE STATE BOARD OF ED.:

- OKed first year payment of \$900K for Latin School renovations. In all, the BPS will get \$18M from the state, 90% of the cost. Given out statewide: \$17M this yr.

THE STATE BOARD (cont.):

- welcomed new Boston rep, Joan Wallace Benjamin of the Boys' & Girls' Clubs and member of the CWEC Board.

The city's other rep, John Gould of the Shawmut Bank, began his term in February.

THE BOSTON TEACHERS' UNION:

- hosted Adam Urbanski, a moving force behind the Rochester teachers' contract.

In a nutshell... Rochester schools got accountability. Teachers got more pay (up to \$70K), more training & shared power.

Good timing: BTU contract is up in August, '89 & they're ready to talk...

THE MAYOR:

- met with, *and listened to*, parents on a new student assignment plan.

Agreed: any new plan must have...

- ✓ goal of quality education
- ✓ *real* choice for *all* parents
- ✓ maximum desegregation
- ✓ more power at the school level
- ✓ clear parent information
- ✓ simplicity
- ✓ a grandfather clause.

Also: the BPS shouldn't use students in bilingual & sped classes to desegregate a school.

Next step? Parents asked the mayor to fund technical assistance from deseg experts. It's being done.

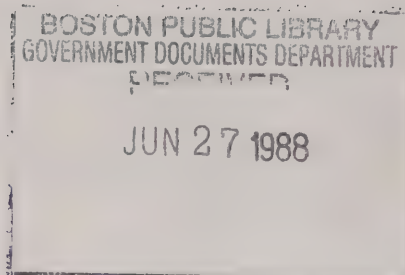
- learned the city's bond rating has jumped to "A," the highest since 1975. Why? Moody's says one reason was the passage of the home rule petition limiting school spending.

△
CEC
SB

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS

I N B R I E F



IN MAY, 1988

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- spent three long meetings struggling with the budget.

Both say the BPS needs more than the mayor's offer of \$350M. Why? Costs of employee contracts are way up. Also: supt wants his Boston Ed Plan.

The mayor's position: the BPS has been overspending for too long. Plus: he's giving BPS *half* of all new---and dwindling---city revenues. He's not budging...

Hoped for: that the supt & SC would look hard at what works & what doesn't.

Has the strategy worked? Yes & no. They did get the budget down to @\$352M from \$368M, *but* ...the course from point A to point B was zig-zag, at best.

Problems:

- ✓ little evidence of coalition-building among SC members
- ✓ less evidence that some do any homework before voting
- ✓ seldom called for: an impact statement on what a budget cut might *really* mean
- ✓ rare: debate about how a decision fits into any overall plan---student assignment, e.g.

Another roadblock: the supt offered few fresh ideas, despite SC requests. On the table at each meeting: cuts he first proposed in March that they'd rejected.

So what *did* they do in May? SC OKed some of supt's cuts & added a few of their own. Some decisions drew fire, others praise...

- ✓ for one week, the basal was out. But...black leaders charged that a vote *against* the new reader was a vote *for* the status quo. By a close vote, it went back in.
- ✓ MBTA passes---not buses--for all grade 6-12 kids. Whose idea was it? The SC's. Parents & principals vow to fight. Why? Safety, accessibility, equity issues. Stay tuned...
- ✓ bilingual consolidation. Over *everyone's* objections, they OKed the supt's plan to close down two of the best programs and move everyone into a third.
- ✓ no teacher layoffs, no separate cluster for disruptive students. High marks for these.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

SPECIAL EDUCATION:
receivership looms over BPS, after 11 years of legal battles. What will it cost? Who will pay? Why has compliance been so elusive?

COURT STREET CHANGES:
a number of top guns are leaving. Dr. Wilson's picks to fill their shoes will set direction of BPS for years to come.

By month's end, the ideas were drying up. A move to turn over more BPS functions to the city---trash, facilities, police---failed by a 6-7 vote. Why? "That's *our* job!"

By June 10....the budget was whittled down to @\$352M. How? They:

- ✓ cut teachers at ACC, Boston Prep, Barron Assessment Ctr. Adult Ed
- ✓ cut sped monitors even more
- ✓ started process to close Umana & move in Barnes
- ✓ started process to cut one of three extra teachers' days from next school year.

Still unclear---how the BPS will spend Chapter 1 funds for next year: for school-day classes or after-school classes?

THE SUPERINTENDENT ALSO:

- put in long hours on the Boston Compact renewal.

In first five years, it's been *huge* success for students: more jobs, scholarships, support. Less successful: getting schools to write improvement plans, cut dropout rate & up achievement.

Task ahead: set criteria to measure each school's effectiveness. Dropout rate may be one way: in some high schools, 1 of every 5 students quits in a year.

In the works... program to track dropouts: why they leave, where they go, how to get them back.

THE SUPERINTENDENT: (cont.)

- learned of MIT's split with Umana High after a 12-year try to make it a high tech school.

The problem: bureaucracy. MIT would have liked:

- ✓ more power for principal & staff to make decisions, set policy
- ✓ a way to select & recruit students interested in science
- ✓ \$\$\$ to do it right.

- helped hand out full scholarships to BU for 58 seniors, each worth \$51,200. In 15 years, BU has awarded 700+, totalling \$17M+.

But do they graduate? With new support programs to help, BU estimates that about 70% may, up from 50% a few years ago.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE ALSO:

- held five hearings on student assignment. Sparse attendance, despite getting notices home to all parents.

Biggest concerns: what's at the end of the bus ride--- a good school. Deseg was *not* an issue: it's a given for many. Other comments: choice, flexibility, making a school part of its community.

Many came to talk about *other* concerns...MBTA policy, bilingual consolidation.

Coming: report to SC by June 30.

- considered some not-too-serious motions on the budget:

✓ ask teachers to donate a day's work to balance the budget.
BTU reaction: No way.

✓ overspend until the money runs out, then ask for more. Motion dropped when penalty was described: \$1K fine/member & year in jail.

THE SCHOOLS:

- coped with lead, violence and other crises. Some principals & teachers are asking: when do we get to "do" education?

✓ Lead: unsafe levels in 59 of 81 elementary schools. Short-term solution: bottled water (\$30K).

Long-term: more tests to pinpoint source, talks with DEQE, DPH, MWRA, etc. Likely finding: lead is in *all* Boston water.

✓ gangs/drug problems: spilling over from the streets into some schools. District C is starting to link up with police & courts to share info and head off trouble.

- gave tests...

✓ The MET: end-of-year standardized reading & math tests. About 35,000 of 49,000 kids in grades 1-12 took it. Many sped kids exempted. More bilingual students tested than in past, at the state's insistence. Expected: scores will go up. One reason: test is now three years old.

✓ the DRP reading test for promotion. Despite three tries, 56 seniors will not graduate because they could not pass.

Irony: others *will* graduate, exempted by the principal. How many? No one knows. Figures not collected by central office.

- sent grade K-8 teachers off to the U.Mass gym for all-day training on the new basal reader. Reviews are in: "a disaster", "an F-."

Teachers were read aloud to from manuals, with no chance to talk with each other. Cost: \$1M+.

Higher grades: programs for high school teachers by subject area.

- applied---five of them---for Carnegie School grants. A good idea, but...the \$\$\$ may be cut from the state budget.

- took a deep breath & aimed for June 30, the last day of school.

SENATE PRESIDENT BULGER:

- proposed the state pay tuitions for students to go to public schools in other towns.

Not so simple as it sounds. BPS could lose big bucks. Example...

BPS spends \$4700/student/yr. State now reimburses BPS \$850/student toward costs.

Brookline spends \$4500/student/year.

For every BPS student who signed up for Brookline, State would pay Brookline \$4500. State would dock BPS---not \$850---but up to \$4500.

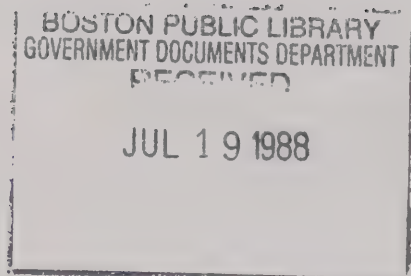
Status: in Ways & Means.

THE BOSTON TEACHERS' UNION:

- surveyed teachers about coming contract issues. Top priorities: they want power to decide..
 - ✓ curriculum
 - ✓ how their schools are run
 - ✓ what level of classes students are assigned to
 - ✓ teaching standards.

THE BOSTON MUNICIPAL RESEARCH BUREAU:

- backed up the mayor's \$350M offer for the schools & made recommendations for FY90:
 - ✓ plan ahead. BPS & city should map-out multi-year funding strategy, like other depts.
 - ✓ get going on contract talks & build in school reform
 - ✓ face up to school closings
 - ✓ cut transportation costs.



IN JUNE, 1988

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- closed up surgery on the budget, trimming it to \$350M at last.

Watching the 3-month long operation from the gallery: Mayor Flynn and City Council.

When it was all over, they had cut:

- ✓ The Boston Ed Plan.....\$6.8M
Mostly in two programs: after-school reading (\$3.1M), student support offices for middle schools (\$2.1M)
- ✓ school staff & supplies....\$5.4M
Hardest hit: middle & high schools. They'll lose administrators, teachers *and* books.
- ✓ central & district staff.....\$3.2M
Many were vacant positions.
- ✓ bus monitors & buses.....\$2.4M
SC added \$\$\$ for sped monitors; the supt. took some out.
- ✓ other.....\$1.8M

Prognosis: the patient will probably live, but...the *process* is far from healthy.

In some systems, the budget debate is a chance to look at programs, toss out what isn't working, and expand what is.

The BPS "debate" was more a shouting match.....

Dr. Wilson:

- ✓ proposed cuts but could not always explain his criteria
- ✓ put the same ideas on the table over and over again, even after the SC had said NO.

The School Committee:

- ✓ never talked about what criteria *they* used to make decisions
- ✓ OKed some recommendations, only to reverse them later, under pressure from constituents
- ✓ rejected other recommendations, only to OK them later, under pressure from the supt.

Some members tried to make their own moves, with no luck.

What *didn't* pass? Pay freezes for SC staff and top administrators, cuts to legal staff.

Symptoms may recur next year unless the BPS...

- ✓ starts this fall on FY90 budget
- ✓ asks principals & teachers what *they* want
- ✓ negotiates contracts very carefully
- ✓ looks for other sources of funds
- ✓ sets real goals & objectives, and sticks to them.

ISSUES TO WATCH....

DR. WILSON'S CONTRACT...
expiring *next* June. He wants promises from the Committee now. Will they renew it? For how long? On what terms? For how much?

SUMMER ACTION ON....
student assignment, voc. ed., special education, facilities.
Many moves will not be coming from Court Street.

THE SUPERINTENDENT ALSO:

- faced the very real possibility of court receivership for special education.

Judge Morse ordered the BPS to come up with a plan---and money to do it right---by June 30. The plan was easy. The funds---\$.8M to \$1.3M--- have proven harder.

Dr. Wilson asked the state for \$\$\$; they offered technical assistance but no cash. He's also asked the mayor. No response yet.

What's the problem? The BPS says money. Advocates say money *and* commitment.

Meanwhile...

- ✓ the BPS interviewed candidates for the Director of Special Education, the 4th in 4 years.
- ✓ Dr. Wilson moved the sped dept. from Curriculum to Operations. Some SC members argued that---given the court case--- sped should answer directly to the supt. His response: it's *my* decision.

- called in principals to talk about:
 - ✓ school-based management. Many hinted at what they'd like, but are skeptical they'll get it. Dr. Wilson made no promises.

- ✓ planning. The superintendent wants a school-by-school, grade-by-grade plan for how they'll raise MET scores next year, and how far.

THE SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

✓ the dropout rate. The dilemma: how to calculate. Example: a student quits the BPS & signs up for a city-run dropout program. Is he or she still a "dropout"?

His charge to principals in the last week of school: followup on each dropout--by phone, mail or visits--and find out where they are.

- released the MET scores and handed out trophies to schools at the top of his ranked lists.

How were the scores? In reading, 7 grades went up slightly, as expected; 3 held their own; 2 dropped. Math: similar.

The number of students at-risk: a staggering 12,388....39% of those tested. That figure doesn't include most bilingual and special needs students....

Footnote....BPS students are almost back up to 1985's scores. In 1986, the test was re-written and scores plummeted.

- opted to spend some Chapter 1 \$\$\$ to buy basal readers for the state-funded remedial classes. What's cut? Classroom aides.
- met with parents and students angry about his bilingual program consolidation. He won't budge, but did offer more staff, resources. They're thinking about it.
- pulled all top staff out of Court Street for two days to review the just-drafted Policy Manual. It's 600 pages of everything you didn't really want to know about the BPS. Cost: \$40K.

What next? The SC must debate and approve. *That'll be fun...*

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- backed off on their plan to put all grade 6-12 students on the MBTA. *Everyone* opposed it: the supt., the MBTA, parents.

Most grade 6-8 students will get school buses back.

- voted *not* to close the Umana and move the Barnes School in. Public hearings drew hundreds protesting Dr. Wilson's plan.

THE SCHOOLS:

- spent much of the last month planning for next year. On the agendas...how to:

✓ spend their state Chapter 188 \$\$\$\$. Schools will probably get \$12/student next year, up from \$10 but not the \$15 hoped-for.

✓ use the basal reader. One dilemma: books were ordered centrally to match students' *grade* levels, not students' *reading* levels.

✓ buy more, with less. Supplies \$\$\$ have all been cut.

- graduated the Class of '88: 2,650 seniors. 350 didn't graduate: they'll go to summer school, repeat the year, or not come back.

Total scholarships awarded: \$6.7M+. About half went to 671 exam school grads.

- celebrated the end of a very busy year with awards nights, field days, open houses.

Some sent kids home with summer work. In District D, 3,000 students have signed contracts to get library cards and read over the summer.

THE MAYOR:

- convened hearings on voc. ed. in Boston. Testifying: business, college, union leaders. Their concern: BPS is not preparing students for jobs in 1990's.

Meanwhile, HHORC/voc. ed. enrollment is down 1/3 in five years. Recent State report says BPS is good at *making* voc. ed. plans, not so good at *doing* them.

Possible: takeover of BPS voc. ed., either by the State or by independent Board.

THE CITY COUNCIL:

- finally OKed \$350M for the BPS, after a few detours. Councillor Yancey wanted to hold out for more; Jim Kelly wanted \$325M.
- voted to set up a commission---named by mayor--- to look hard at how the BPS is organized & run.

Of special interest: how to make schools both better and more accountable. Also: the role and effectiveness of the 13-member SC. Stay tuned.

THE SENATE:

- passed President Bulger's bill to pay tuition for BPS & Worcester students to go to suburban schools. Pricetag: \$1M for 200 students.

YES votes from Boston Senators Keating, Lewis, Walsh.

House passed the bill as part of the budget. Next stop: the governor's desk. He can veto or OK.

EVERYONE:

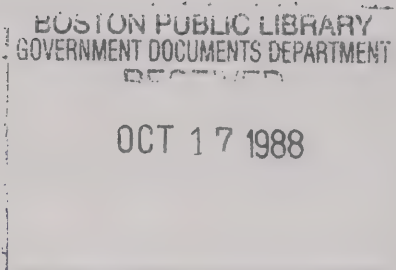
- said goodbye and good luck to Deputy Superintendents Joe McDonough and Jim Walsh. They *will* be missed.....

11
CEC
SB

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS

I N B R I E F



IN JULY, AUGUST & SEPTEMBER,

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- drew cheers for top staff picks:
 - ✓ William Abbott, Cleveland School principal, as Deputy Supt for Operations.
 - ✓ Peter Rowe, Deputy Supt for Planning & Business.
 - ✓ Michael Fung, District E Supt. Most recently Taft School principal, four children in BPS.
- made some school-based management-like moves. Asked his top staff to:
 - ✓ lay out the system's problems and propose solutions. Word is he got an earfull.
 - ✓ write, not *wills*, but *I-wills*, promises for the year. And if they can't keep them? It's all part of evaluation.
 - ✓ look at models of decentralization. Convened: a work group headed by Bill Abbott.
 - ✓ submit ideas on student assignment, contract talks, etc.

Also convened: advisory group to make suggestions on teachers' contract. Who's on it? Parent & advocacy groups, BPS staff.

Will it all bear fruit? Skeptics call it window-dressing. Others say it's real.

The bigger question: can *recommendations* for change be translated into *real* change??

- released median 1988 SAT/College Board scores:

	BPS	Mass	National
Verbal	355	432	428
Math	409	474	476
SATs are scored 200-800.			

Press notice pointed out slight jump.

Buried inside, a stunning stat: 24% of BPS students scored below 240 in verbal. They probably got @ 9 of 85 questions correct.

Math is a little better.

- accepted another \$1.5M from the city to cover unexpected costs for special ed, transportation and alternative ed.

BPS budget now \$351.5M.

- saw the BPS in and out of court over two recurring issues:

- ✓ *Special Education*
Receivership loomed but was averted, at least for now. The problem? BPS non-compliance with court orders.

How was it resolved? The BPS pledged \$800K more for staff, computers, etc.

Also promised: more attention. Dr. Wilson bumped job of Sped Director up to Senior Manager, answering only to him, and named Judith Reigelhaupt, from State Dept. of Ed.

Parents' view of it all: wait-and-see. One negative for them: they had legal right to screen and recommend Director, *not* Senior Manager.

- ✓ *Bilingual Education*
Federal court nixed BPS plans to consolidate programs and reassign students to save money.

Judge Garrity asked, why move programs around now, if a new student assignment plan is coming next year?

The court said: wait a year and include in overall plan.

Update: parents may ask the court to cite BPS for contempt for other problems. More to come...

ISSUES TO WATCH...

Everyone has advisory groups now: the mayor, the superintendent, the School Committee.

Will their recommendations all fit together? Can the whole be made larger than the sum of all parts?

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- finally gave in and put most high school students back on school buses.

To save \$\$\$, they'd asked for T service. MBTA said no, citing extra costs and timing: MBTA budget is set in November, SC request came in May. SC will ask again *this* November for *next* school year.

The bigger picture: it became a test of SC policy-making.

How'd they do? Not very well.

- ✓ Motion was made despite supt's & parents' objections.
- ✓ Debate dominated meetings.
- ✓ Votes they took to *save* \$500K would have *cost* \$1.2M to reverse.
- ✓ Last minute changes in school hours---and BPS failure to tell them---infuriated parents.

- said they'd discuss renewing the supt's contract in January, then October. Still unclear when.

Contract ends 8-89. Meanwhile, they gave Dr. Wilson homework: list what you have accomplished and what you want to do yet.

- agreed 12-1 to work with the mayor's office on student assignment. NO: John Grady. He says it's the SC's job to write a plan.

Meanwhile, the mayor hired, at parents' request, two nationally known assignment/deseg experts---Mike Alves, state Dept of Ed, and Charles Willie, Harvard.

They're drafting a plan, ready by December, for SC review. Hoped for: approval and phase-in beginning 9-89.

THE SCHOOLS:

- opened smoothly despite usual transportation problems, many fallout from SC policy changes.

Adding to the confusion: pick up/drop off at day care centers is a mess. BPS sent 40,000 notices home to parents June 29. School ended June 30. They got, literally, only a handful back.

Result: process has to begin again, meaning weeks of delays. The SC had *ordered* that service begin opening day.

- unpacked the basal, some with enthusiasm, some with doubt. To do: "trade" with other schools so kids have books on their reading level, not grade level.

Next: look for resources, materials, etc. Little is budgeted.

- started school with more *and* less:
 - ✓ more specialists---computers, art, reading teachers---for elementary schools
 - ✓ more planning time for K-5 teachers: 135 minutes/week
 - ✓ fewer \$\$\$ for books, supplies
 - ✓ smaller Ch. 188 pot: \$10/child instead of the expected \$15
 - ✓ less staff at middle & high schools.

Last year, unspent supplies money was taken back in spring. This year, schools are spending it all fast, with some resentment and much worry about future needs.

- anticipated two new policies:
 - ✓ the promise to supt that they'll raise Met Test scores, school-by-school and grade-by-grade, by an agreed-to number of points.
 - ✓ parent evaluation of principals, a first. Results: to District Supt.

GOVERNOR DUKAKIS:

- vetoed choose-a-school plan, but asked state for pilot program.

Dept of Ed is looking at models: e.g., school at work site for urban/suburban employees' kids. Common thread in all: parent choice.

MASS ADVOCACY:

- released reports on middle schools & on BPS Met scores.

Findings: Many BPS policies/practices are at odds with research. Also: Met score gap is widening between white students and all others.

They call for: remediation, restructuring, retraining, rethinking.

THE BOSTON TEACHERS' UNION:

- readied for contract talks, calling the status quo "unacceptable."

What's on their agenda? "Significant reform." Hints from both sides: talks will be more cooperative, less confrontational.

THE MAYOR:

- leaped headlong into school issues, convening a panel to study school governance, management, facilities, etc.

Who's on the panel?

Hubie Jones, BU.....Chair
Bruce Bolling, City Council
Vin Buchanan, Latin Acad. parent
Estela Carrion, education activist
Ferdinand Colloredo-Mansfield,
Cabot, Cabot & Forbes

Ed Doherty, BTU
Bill Edgerly, State Street Bank
Frank Jenifer, Chancellor of Ed.
Two more may be added: SC rep and second parent.

Reaction: mixed. Some say it's about time. Others are wary of political motives. Mayor cites frustration with BPS failure to improve.

△
CEC
83

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS

I N B R I E F

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED

NOV 16 1988

IN OCTOBER, 1988

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- sat down with the Boston Teachers' Union to talk contract.

The BPS is proposing:

- ✓ more flexibility in assigning and laying off teachers
- ✓ ten hours of after-school professional development/year
- ✓ less planning time
- ✓ longer school day/year for staff
- ✓ no pay raise for teachers with "unsatisfactory" evaluations
- ✓ more job security for those with "good" or "excellent."

The BTU is proposing:

- ✓ a professional training institute, with 8-10 weeks of all-day sessions for small groups
- ✓ 14% raise. They'd make \$27K-\$47K, beginning in September.
- ✓ drop in class size in early grades. Example: 15 maximum in kindergarten. Now: 25.
- ✓ more planning time
- ✓ a desk, an office, etc., for each
- ✓ fewer menial tasks in exchange for more professional ones. Example: teachers would give up lunch duty and be mentor/advisor to 20 students instead.

They both want some kind of:

- ✓ school-based management
- ✓ mentor/master teachers
- ✓ teachers-helping-teachers panel in each school
- ✓ staff selection flexibility. One model: principal & teachers interview and choose staff for vacant slots. Now: principal chooses, with seniority major factor.

- heard *good* news....that the 46% dropout rate may be inflated. By tracking individuals, an MIT grad student estimates it is @ 34%.

and *bad*....But, he warns, BPS calculation methods have problems. Example: kids who drop out in grades 6-8 are never counted. The real rate *could* be higher.

Other findings:

- ✓ neighborhood differences. Highest dropout rates are for kids who live in South Boston (45%), Roxbury (43%), Mission Hill (42%), East Boston (41%).
- ✓ grade 9 students who are kept back are three times more likely to drop out.

The solution? The study suggests the BPS give up central control and turn power over to principals, teachers and parents.

ISSUES TO WATCH...

Student assignment: designing a new plan is easy. Once approved, making it work will be *much* harder.

Is the bureaucracy up to the task? Is the commitment there? And, more importantly, the enthusiasm?

- released June's non-promote rates: 4,502 (9%) of BPS students were "kept back." They had failing grades, poor attendance and/or too-low scores on a required reading test.

The non-promote rates:

- ✓ are down from 1987 in nine grades, up in three. The highest: one in four grade 9 students failed.
- ✓ are still high for grade 1: 18%. Many educators are calling for a new look at the early grades. One idea: a no-fail policy.
- ✓ vary greatly by school. Example: 5% of grade 7 students failed at the Gavin, 31% at the Wheatley.

Footnote..Mass Advocacy reports that what children fear most are:

1. the death of a parent
2. going blind
3. being kept back in school.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- agreed, in a hurry-up 8Y-5N vote, to renew Dr. Wilson's contract. To be worked out: for how long, at what salary, under what terms.
- YES: Anderson, Cappucci, Grady, McGuire, Nucci, O'Bryant, O'Reilly, Wade,
- NO: Bowman, Browne, Burke, Davis-Mullen, Walsh-Tomasini.

Dr. Wilson's current four-year contract expires 6-89. Salary: \$95K. Some members have hinted that they'd go for \$125K.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE: (cont.)

- heard parent complaints against -- and teacher support for -- Hyde Park High headmaster. Charges: racial insensitivity, lack of leadership.

BPS investigation has begun, with Deputy Supt. Bill Abbott and Equal Opportunity staffer, Larry Faison.

One problem: a school's "climate" is difficult to gauge. Measurable stats for HP High---poor test scores, high dropout rates, etc---are similar to many other BPS high schools.

- OKed Juanita Wade as their rep to the Mayor's Advisory Panel on schools.

THE SUPERINTENDENT, SCHOOL COMMITTEE, & MAYOR:

- continued to work on the big issue: student assignment. Consultants Alves & Willie unveiled draft of proposed new plan.

They would:

- √ divide city into three zones...
North : East Boston to Brighton
West: Roxbury to Hyde Park
East : S. Boston & Dorchester
- √ then allow parents to choose from any school in zone for kindergarten-grade 8, and assign within flexible racial guidelines.

All the details aren't worked out yet, but SC has set up info sessions for Nov. 29, Dec. 1 & 3.
Parents can hear about---and share thoughts on---what's being proposed.

After that: a full plan should be ready for the SC by Christmas. They have final say.

Still hoped for: startup of at least some parts by next September.

THE SCHOOLS:

- gave the annual state Basic Skills Tests to grades 3, 6 & 9. It's loosely diagnostic: results lay out each student's strengths & weaknesses in reading, writing & math.
- took part in first of two all-day professional days. This one: planned by schools & districts, not central. Programs: great variety. Reviews: OK to excellent.

Elementary staff met together by district. Theme: the new basal reader, with speakers, workshops, problem-sharing/solving.

Some middle & high schools planned together, some did their own thing.

Big hit: Harvard's reading expert, Jeanne Chall. Another: "Power communications," how to dress, talk, etc. to get students' respect.

- encouraged staff to go hear Yale's Dr. James Comer speak about his 12-year efforts in New Haven. His work there has meant higher scores, fewer suspensions, etc. in some of city's worst schools.

How? Building better relationships between staff, students & parents. Sounds simple but, he warns, it's very hard work.

- got some private money to spiff up their buildings:
 - √ Three have new brighter, warmer, quieter windows, thanks to Massport. In all, they've done 27 schools.
 - √ The McCormack opened an \$800K playground, paid for by Harbor Point's (former Columbia Point) developer.
 - √ The Lewenberg raised the flag on its spectacular, parent-designed & planted front yard. Funds: Greenspace Alliance.

THE SCHOOLS: (cont.)

- spent hours tracking down names/addresses/phones of parents who hadn't signed a note that they'd read the Standards of Behavior. Info was required by central office.
- began to spend state Ch.188 \$\$:
 - √ all get School Improvement money: \$10/student.
 - √ 43 elementary & middle schools get Opportunity School money, from \$25K-\$68K each. State awards none to high schools.

It's a "godsend," schools say, the only cash that parents & staff can spend as *they* like.

One---the Mather--"bought" a full-day bus driver (\$21K) & hit the road. BPS provides a bus.

The *Mathermobile*:

- √ goes on field trips. Each student will get 8-9 trips this year.
- √ takes kids to local club for gym.
- √ is a late bus so kids can stay for after-school clubs, classes, etc.

THE PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL:

- held out a *carrot* to the BPS... the promise of five more years of support & money... and a *stick*... but not until student assignment & school-based management is in place.
- matched business partners to 7 of 22 middle schools, a first:
Cleveland.....Brigham & Women's
M. Curley..... N.E. Baptist Hospital
Dearborn..... Federal Reserve
Gavin..... Gillette
King..... Shawmut Bank
Lewenberg.. IBM
Timilty..... Mass. General.

All high schools have partners.

△
CEC
SB

A MONTHLY REVIEW
OF KEY ISSUES
AFFECTING THE
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BPS
IN BRIEF

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT
RECEIVED

JAN 25 1989

IN DECEMBER, 1988

EVERYONE:

- worked on student assignment.

Consultants Alves & Willie presented their draft 3-zone controlled choice plan to the SC. Despite complaints from some that the process was being rushed, the SC kept its promise to act by year's end, voting 10-1-2 [Andersen - "no"; McGuire and O'Bryant - "present"] to adopt the "framework" of the plan and start implementation by 9/89. SC ordered the supt to bring back a complete plan by 1/26, will hold public hearing in early Feb. & vote on 2/17.

Most SC members and citizens' groups like the plan's "concepts," but many are concerned about:

- *equity* - not enough good schools in East Zone; it should get extra \$\$ to build programs.
- *money* - plan will cost lots, no additional \$\$ allocated yet from city or state (except \$70k from Ch. 636 for parent information).
- *zone boundaries* - Mattapan would be split in A&W model.
- *timetable* - 9/89 is too soon to even partially implement a plan that won't be approved until Feb. at the earliest. Note: the Boston Ed. Plan student assignment task force recommended a new plan must be approved by Nov. to be implemented by following Sept.
- *parent information* - few minority parents attended hearings in Nov./Dec., more outreach needed in all languages.

What's happened since 12/28?
Supt and 40 top staff retreated to

Dedham (cost: \$7400, 37% of \$\$ allocated for planning) to work on plan details. Community supts invited at the last minute, left early; no one got much material in advance. Some changes being discussed:

- *zone boundaries*. One option: East Zone may get all of Mattapan plus Hyde Pk.
- *implementation phase-in*. It may be limited only to kindergarten in 9/89.
- *citywide high schools*. The supt told headmasters to pick a school theme -- such as 'performing arts' and 'communications.' Final decisions will be made by Court St. A&W wrote plan only for K-8, said high schools needed more study.
- *a few closings, reopenings, changes in grade structure*.

How do schools feel about the plan? Anxious, uncertain, left out of planning process.

ISSUES TO WATCH:

Student assignment

What will zone boundaries look like? Will zone supts have a say over level & kind of staffing, or will Court St. just reshuffle existing personnel? Will planning focus on school-by-school improvement?

The budget

What revisions will the supt unveil on Jan. 13 to reduce the \$3.5M deficit? Will the School Committee go for them?

THE SUPERINTENDENT AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- didn't see much progress in contract talks with the teachers' union.

The BPS proposed a 3% raise for all teachers in schools which meet performance goals set by Court St., no raise for teachers at schools that don't. The BTU called the proposal an "insult," anticipates difficult bargaining and no early settlement. We couldn't reach BPS negotiators for comment.

THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- released new dropout report using revised method of calculation which, unlike the old method:
 - doesn't include students who transfer to non-BPS schools
 - counts only once those students who repeat 9th grade. 1403 students assigned to grade 9 in 1983 had also been assigned to 9th grade in 1981, 1982 or both. This group's cohort dropout rate is 69.4%.
- includes grades 6-8
- tracks individuals thru the years
- makes other corrections.

What's the difference? Not much for the annual rate -- the % of students who drop out each year. For 1987/88, excluding transfers, it dipped from 14.5% to 13.4%. But a big difference for the cohort rate -- the % of 9th graders who drop out before expected graduation year. For the class of '87, it dropped from 52.1% to 39.6%. If students who transfer out are included in the denominator (and some experts say they should be)

the cohort rate drops to 33.7%.

Other findings:

- About 1.2% of students in grades 6-8 drop out each year, but of 8th graders who are 16 by June, about 25% drop out.
- The annual dropout rate has declined for the past 3 years; the cohort rate is up a bit.
- Annual and cohort dropout rates are highest for Hispanics and native Americans, lowest for Asians; blacks & whites are in between and similar to each other.

- clarified his position re. last month's rift with South End Hispanic parents -- and so did they.

The parents are demanding better services for Hispanic parents and students in regular ed programs, a commitment to reduce the Hispanic dropout rate (now 54%), more Hispanic staff in schools and Court St. The supt said he'd talk to them if they were a citywide organization, so they organized. Now he says he won't necessarily meet with them on an ongoing basis; they can be represented through MPAC or CPC. The supt will meet with them in January.

- worked on school-based management and balancing the budget, but nothing public yet.

THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

- heard 4-yr. pres. John Nucci bang the gavel for the last time. Nucci has his eye on a city council seat.

The new president is Tom O'Reilly, a member since 1983, who defeated John O'Bryant on the 17th ballot. But that's no record; once in the 1950's it took a 5-man SC 23 ballots to choose its leader. Other officers: Davis-Mullen is VP, McGuire back as treasurer.

O'Reilly will try a new format: one meeting a month devoted to issues, the other to action.

THE SCHOOLS:

- started working on their FY90 budgets, due in early Jan. All the principals & headmasters we talked to called it an exercise in futility. It's based on formula. To figure budget for instructional supplies [the 620 account], Court St. projects enrollment for each school and principal multiplies that # by per capita allotment.

Elem. schools get \$55/student.
Middle schools get \$62/student.
High schools get \$86/student.
Amounts reflect cuts of last spring, way down from FY88.

Biggest gripes: many principals say enrollment projections are too low, all say per student allocations are far from adequate. External grant \$\$ help. The Harvard-Kent added up theirs and it came to \$157,000 (more at some schools, less at others).

New math books for K-12 scheduled for Sept. won't come out of 620 acct. On this subject, principals say they'd like to wait another year before imposing another new series on teachers; they're still getting used to HBJ readers.

- finished 4 months of principal supervision & evaluation of senior custodians, a provision of new custodians' contract.

How is it working? Very mixed reviews. Some principals say communication with senior custodian is much better, custodians are agreeable to work schedule & buildings are cleaner. Others say it takes too much time for not much improvement. A few spend up to 80% of some days on custodial issues. And principals still don't have much clout -- they can give a written reprimand to an unsatisfactory custodian, but further action must be taken by Court St.

Another big complaint: not enough custodians. Cutbacks mean positions are unfilled & custodians of-

ten are pulled out and sent to other schools. FY89 custodian overtime \$\$ ran out on 12/1. CWEC's soon-to-be-released report on BPS facilities notes that, based on national average, the BPS should have 601 custodians for its 11M sq. ft.; it now has 435.

- sent warning notices to parents of students in danger of failing 2nd marking period for any of 5 reasons: failing on tests, poor or no homework, no makeup work, poor class work, and poor attendance.

At some schools, 20% of students may get warning notices; at others, up to 65%. Some principals use them to scare parents into calling the school.

Poor attendance is a big problem and often the cause of poor school work. Many schools hold awards assemblies, give T-shirts, movie tickets, other incentives to students with good attendance. Boston High School is trying something different -- letting kids "make up" missed days by going to school on Saturday.

- rewarded readers and artists. "Readasaurus" summer reading incentive program winning schools -- Lee, Marshall, Quincy, Curley, Timilty, Taft, Irving & McCormack - got trophies from the mayor. The grand prize winners of the Holiday Greeting Card contest from the Conley, English, Mann and Taft had their pictures made into cards & sold at Filene's.
- celebrated the winter holidays. Many schools hit the road to sing at City Hall, the Westin, Quincy Market, NE Telephone, nursing homes and elsewhere. Others held multicultural assemblies & door decorating contests. And we lost count of the number of "Nut-crackers" in production!